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MONOGRAPHS ON ARTISTS

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MONOGRAPHS ON ARTISTS

EDITED, AND WRITTEN JOINTLY WITH OTHER AUTHORS,

BY

H. KNACKFUSS

IX.

RUBENS

BIELEFELD AND LEIPZIG
VELHAGEN & KLASING

NEW YORK: LEMCKE & BUECHNER

1904

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RUBENS

BY

H. KNACKFUSS

TRANSLATED BY

LOUISE M. RICHTER

WITH 122 ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PICTURES AND DRAWINGS

BIELEFELD AND LEIPZIG
VELHAGEN & KLASING

NEW YORK. LEMCKE & BUECHNER

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PORTRAIT OF RUBENS BY HIMSELF. In the Imperial Gallery at Vienna.
After a photograph from the original by J. Löwy, Vienna.

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PREFACE.

The fact is unquestionable, that this volume on "Rubens" which in spite of its brevity, has gone through seven editions in Germany, in less than ten years still holds its own, beside more elaborate and ambitious works, published since on this great Flemish master. Its convenient form, combined with its numerous and attractive illustrations, have proved it to be well adapted as a guide to his work: and especially to assist students who, desirous of understanding him thoroughly, direct their steps to those places, wherein he has principally left his mark.

Fully recognizing the importance of a perfect rendering of this work, and in order also to do justice to the author himself, I have been glad to obtain the assistance of so distinguished a writer as Mr. Hobart Cust in the revision of the English phraseology, so that, while retaining the meaning of the German original in its integrity, the differences in the two languages might be adequately overcome.

LOUISE M. RICHTER.

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PETER PAUL RUBENS.

On a fine old mansion in the Sternengasse at Cologne, a marble slab informs the stranger that here Peter Paul Rubens was born. But neither Cologne nor her rival, Antwerp, can support their claim to the honour of having given birth to the Flemish artist-prince. Incontestible facts now prove that this event occurred in the little town of Siegen in Westphalia.

The ancestors of Rubens had for centuries been settled in Antwerp as respectable burghers. His grand-father was a dispensing chemist, who also owned a grocer's shop; but his father was educated to a learned profession. Johann Rubens was born in 1530, studied law at Louvain and Padua, and took the degree of Doctor of Civil and Ecclesiastical Law with honours in Rome. Returning to his native country, on the 29th November 1561 he married a merchant's daughter named Maria Pypelincks. In 1562 he was appointed an Assessor, an office which he held for five years, during the period of Revolution against the Spanish rule. Under the subsequent Governorship of the tyrannical Duke of Alba, when Counts Egmont and Horn suffered on the scaffold for their patriotism, Johann Rubens, suspected of leanings towards the Protestant Heresy, thought it wise to leave his home. Towards the end of the year 1568, armed with credentials from the municipality of Antwerp, he fled to Cologne. In that city was residing, at that time, Anna of Saxony, wife of William of Orange, the great leader of the Dutch Rebellion. Rubens, introduced to this rather capricious and morbidly excitable princess by her legal adviser, John Betz of Malines, himself a fugitive, became first her intimate friend and then her lover. This illicit relationship could not long remain a secret, and Count Johann of Nassau, brother of William of Orange, arrested Rubens in March 1571 on his way to Siegen, a small town in the territory of Nassau, whither Princess Anna had already retired to await her confinement, and imprisoned him at Dillenburg. According to the law of the country since he had confessed his guilt Rubens' life was forfeit: and, since his arrest had taken place in the territory of Nassau the count had the right to avenge his brother's honour by passing upon him sentence of death. Both these princes, however, took into consideration the fact,

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Fig. 1. Alleged Portrait of the artist's mother.
In the Pinakothek at Munich.
After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich.
(To page 13.)

that such a proceeding would only make matters worse by publishing the family scandal. Moreover the offender found a most eloquent intercessor in a quarter whence he certainly least deserved to expect it. Maria Pypelincks, his injured wife, did her utmost to procure his pardon. Two letters of sympathy and consolation have come down to us, addressed by her to her imprisoned husband, bearing witness to her high-minded generosity: "I am more than glad," she writes to him, "that, touched by my forgiveness, you (Euer Liebden) feel now somewhat comforted. I did not imagine that you could ever think, that I should make great difficulty in this matter, as indeed I have not done. How could I ever be so cruel as to add to your great distress and tribulation. On the contrary I feel as if I could even give my own hearts-blood to help you. Should I be like that most wicked servant in the Gospels, who, though all his own debt had been forgiven him, yet compelled his fellow-servant to pay him to the uttermost farthing? Let your mind be at rest as to my forgiveness; would to God that your freedom were dependent on it, so that we might soon be happy again. . . . I pray that God will hear my petition; so that they will spare and have mercy upon us; for it is certain that, should I hear the news of your death, I should die myself of a broken heart. The words though of her Grace" (probably the mother of the Orange princes) "which I have conveyed to you in another letter, still give me hope. . . . I cannot believe that we shall be so completely and so miserably separated. . . . O God! may that never be! My soul is so much in sympathy with yours and in union with you, that

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Fig. 2. The Apostles Peter and Paul. Drawing in the Albertina at Vienna.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York. (To page 15.)

I suffer with the same pain that you are suffering. I believe that if these noble gentlemen could only see my tears they would have pity upon me, even had they hearts of stone. If there be no other resource, I shall implore them to have pity upon me, although you have forbidden me to do so. We ask not for justice, but only for mercy. If we cannot obtain

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Fig. 3. PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG MAN. In the Pinakothek at Munich. After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 13.)

that, what is there to be done? Oh! heavenly and merciful father! thou wilt help us then! Thou will'st not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live. Pour into the hearts of these noble gentlemen, whom we have so deeply offended, the spirit of thy mercy, that we may soon be delivered from all these tribulations and fears: they have already endured so long! . . ." The end of the letter runs thus: "Now I recommend you to the Lord, for I can write no more, and I beg of you, not to anticipate the worst: for that will anyhow come soon enough. To be always thinking of death and dreading death is worse than death itself. Therefore banish these thoughts from your heart. I hope and trust in God, that he may punish us more leniently, and that he may still give us both joy after all this grief. For this I beseech him from the bottom of my heart, recommending you to the Almighty, that he may strengthen and comfort you with his Holy Spirit. I shall continually pray for you; and so also do our little children, who send their love and who — God knows — long so much to see you. Written on the 1st of April at night between 12 and 1 o'clock. No longer sign yourself 'unworthy husband' since I have forgiven you all.

Your faithful wife

Maria Ruebens."[1])

The noble sentiments of the mother are reflected in the superior bearing and noble mind, which later on distinguished the famous son.

After the generous woman had vainly tried for two years by personal and epistolary entreaties to secure her husband's liberty from Count Johann,

[1]) It was thus that the family of Rubens spelt their surname during their stay in Germany, in order to bring it into accord with the native pronunciation.

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she at last succeeded in freeing him from the prison at Dillenburg by paying a sum of 6000 Thalers (about £ 900) as bail for him. He was allowed to reside at Siegen, though under certain restrictions. It was here that, in the spring of the year 1573, husband and wife met again for the first time after their heavy trials. During their stay in Siegen Frau Maria gave birth to two sons. The eldest Philip, — her fifth child, — born in 1574, later on became one of the civic authorities at Antwerp, where he made a name for himself; whilst the other, who first saw the light on the 29th of June 1577, on account of the date of his birth, received at the font the names of the two great Apostles: Peter and Paul. This infant was destined to immortalize the name of Rubens.

Towards the end of the year 1577, Princess Anna, who had been meanwhile divorced from her husband died. Johann Rubens therefore thought the time propitious to attain a free pardon from the Prince of Orange, who moreover was happily married once more. He supported in 1578 this petition by renouncing a part of the sum which, as we have seen above, had been paid as his security, and on the proceeds of which his family had hitherto been quietly living. He also asked to be allowed to live in a town nearer his own country, so that he might be enabled to make a respectable living for his wife and children. His request was granted on condition; that he should present himself before the municipality of Nassau whenever required to do so: and that he should never again enter the separate dominions of William of Oranje, nor dare to come into his presence. Johann Rubens was thus at last allowed to return to Cologne with his family, where he took up his abode in his former residence in the Sternengasse. Their circumstances soon began to improve, when suddenly, in the autumn of the year 1582, he received a peremptory order to return to Siegen and go back to prison. Again it was his devoted wife who interceded for him, and again she had to support her entreaties with a sacrifice of money. For the Count of Nassau needed a large sum of money to help his brother in the war against the Spanish Supremacy. It was therefore only

Fig. 4. Democritos, from a series of antique portrait-heads. Engraving by L. Vostermann. (To page 16.)

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by sacrificing all but £120 of the security that he at last recovered his entire freedom. He never left Cologne again, but died on the 1st of March 1587, and was buried there in the church of St. Peter. When we think of these sad family-events we cannot read without emotion the eulogistic epitaph which his disconsolate widow inscribed upon his tombstone, still to be seen behind the altar in that church. She makes no allusion to their sojourn at Siegen, and it can easily be understood why the family avoided speaking of it; for there is no doubt that the loving mother tried to hide from her children those sad circumstances, which had caused her such unhappiness. And it was probably for this reason that Peter Paul Rubens thought himself justified in stating: that he had passed the first 10 years of his life in Cologne. It is therefore not to be wondered at, that for centuries Cologne was supposed to have been his birthplace.

We hear from Rubens that he acquired the rudiments of his education with great facility, and that he soon surpassed other boys of his own age. The most important foundation however of his future greatness was undoubtedly the noble character inherited from his mother, who had acted so heroically in the domestic tragedies of her own life.

After the death of Johann Rubens his widow in June 1587 at length obtained permission to return to Antwerp with her childern, which she did during the following year. It was there that her son Peter Paul received his scientific education in the so-called "Pfaffenschule". He acquired a wide general knowledge and spoke fluently no less than seven languages: Flemish, German, Latin, Spanish, French, Italian, and English. We know from Balthasar Moretus, a celebrated printer of the time, that Rubens was esteemed in his school as much for his intellectual qualities as for the amiability of his character. For a time he was attached as page to the suite of Marguerite de Ligne, widow of Count Philip of Lalaing, since his mother wished him to acquire the courtly manners then prevailing in good society, but his marked artistic inclinations

Fig. 5. Demosthenes, from a series of antique portrait-busts designed by Rubens. Engraving by H. Witdoek.
(To page 16.)

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Fig. 6. TIBERIUS AND AGRIPPINA. In the Liechtenstein Gallery at Vienna.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 16.)

soon showed themselves. At Antwerp the Art of painting was flourishing in spite of the fact that this town had become poor and desolate owing to its siege by the Prince of Parma. Indeed it seemed as if that unhappy city had sought solace for the loss of her liberty in the dreamland of art. So complete was her collapse under the Spanish dominion that her population had sunk from 85000 to 55000 and grass grew in the streets in which carriages or horsemen were never seen.

Peter Paul Rubens' first master was the landscape-painter Tobias Verhaeght, under whom however he studied but a short time. Then for four years he worked in the *atelier* of Adam van Noort, an artist much praised by his contemporaries for his dexterity in painting, but of whose talent we can now form no judgement whatever, since no picture now extant can with any certainty be attributed to him. For another four years Rubens studied with van Veen, at that time regarded as "the Prince of Flemish Painting". This very learned and distinguished man, whose family had inherited the titles of Herrn van Hogeveen, Desplasse, Vuerse, Draakensteyn &c. was descended from the Duke Johann III. of Brabant and Isabella van Veen.

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Fig. 7. Study of Heads and Hands. In the Albertina at Vienna.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 18.)

A perfect courtier, he was much esteemed by the Prince of Parma, whose court-painter he became. He produced some rather clever works in imitation of the then prevalent manneristic style of Italian art at that time.

In 1598 Peter Paul Rubens was admitted into the guild of St. Luke. We do not know however much about his early work; although the *Holy Trinity* in the Museum at Antwerp is generally regarded as one of his first paintings. It represents the Dead Christ, supported by two angels and holding the symbols of his Passion, in the arms of God the Father above whom hovers the Holy Spirit. It must be admitted, that this picture taken as a whole, is neither satisfactory nor beautiful, but it certainly shows an original masterhand; an overwhelming and exuberant power, tending to create exaggerated form and bold fore-shortening; an inclination to fill empty space with sumptuous

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objects; a display of harmonious colouring and pictorial effect: and a strong task for soft and shining flesh-tints, the shadows in which graduate almost to the red of the blood. Another early work is *the Annunciation* with figures over life-size in the Museum of Art-History at Vienna. A portrait bust of a *Young Man* in the old Pinakothek at Munich also shows his method of executing portraits (Fig. 3) at this early period. In the same collection is a sketch in oil of an *Old Lady in a Black Veil,* conceived apparently with an expression of tenderness. This painting, if tradition is to be believed, represents his mother (Fig. 1) and we may therefore conclude that it was painted before he went to Italy.

A lengthy stay in Italy was regarded at that time as an indispensable factor in the education of a painter. Rubens started on the 9th of May 1600 on his Italian travels. He first went to Venice where the works of the masters of glowing colour no doubt specially attracted him. Through the medium of a Mantuan nobleman, whose acquaintance he made in Venice he was invited to the court of Mantua during that same year. Among all the numerous art-loving princes of his time, Vincenzo Gonzaga, then Duke of Mantua, was perhaps the most zealous. He appointed the young Fleming his court-painter

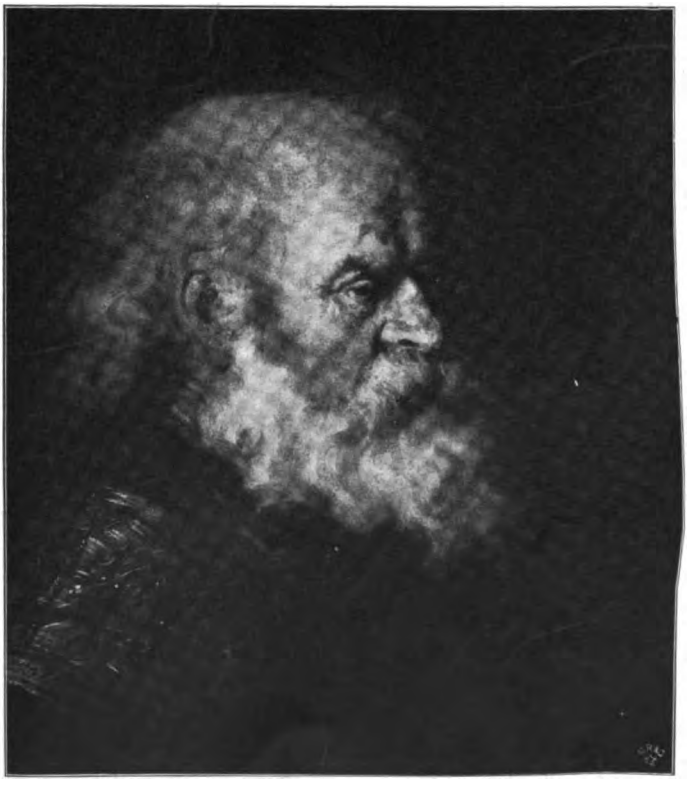

Fig. 8. Head of a Bishop. In the Dresden Gallery.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 18.)

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with a salary of 400 ducats per annum: and we know that Rubens painted for him a number of fine portraits, besides various other pictures. In the year 1601 he was sent to Rome to copy some of the celebrated old masters. Whilst there he also received a commission from his own country. Archduke Albrecht of Austria, who had married Isabella, daughter of Philip II. of Spain, had just before the death of that monarch in 1598 been appointed Governor of the Spanish Netherlands. The title of Cardinal of the church of Sta. Croce in Gerusalemme in Rome had also been conferred upon him. He availed himself therefore of the opportunity afforded him by the presence in the Eternal City of so artistically gifted a subject, with whom he no doubt became acquainted through Otho van Veen, to present to his titular church three altar-pieces. The "Crowning with Thorns", the "Crucifixion" and the "Invention of the Cross" were the three pictures painted by Rubens on this occasion for this purpose. They remained *in situ* until 1811, when

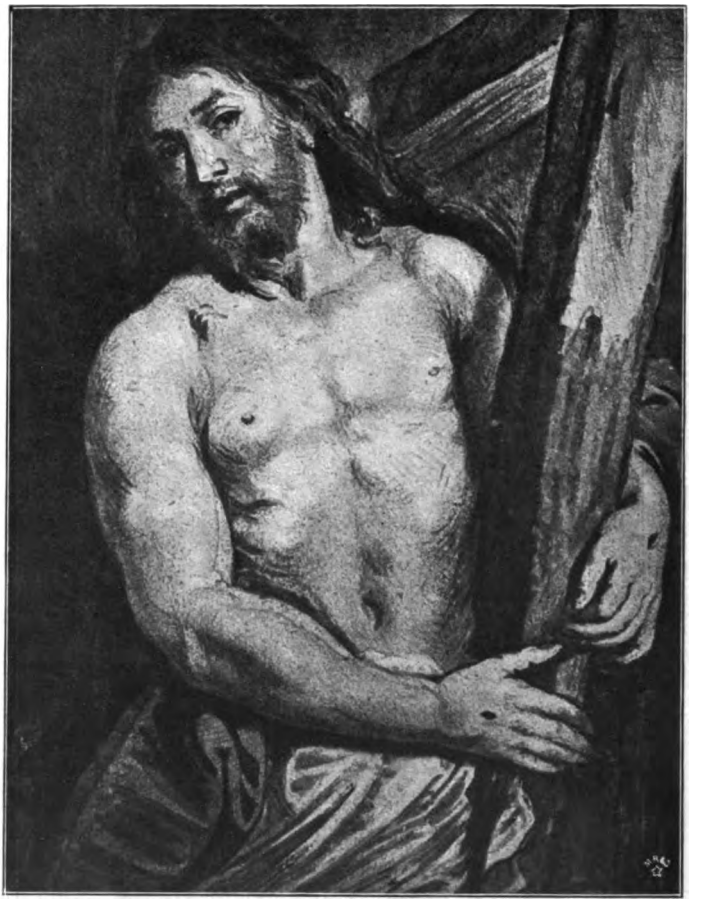

Fig. 9. CHRIST, from a series of drawings: Christ and the twelve Apostles.
In the Albertina at Vienna.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Cie., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 18.)

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they were brought to England, only to be sold again the following year, since when they have disappeared. A few years ago there was a rumour that they had been rediscovered in the South of France.

Rubens must have already possessed that marvellous productive power for which he remained unrivalled throughout his artistic career. From the 20th of April 1602 we find him back again in Mantua, having carried out, not only the commissions of the Archduke, but also those of the Duke of Mantua.

Fig. 10. Portrait of a Franciscan Monk In the Pinakothek at Munich. After a photopraph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich.
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It stands to reason that Rubens during his stay in Rome studied antique art as well as the works of the great Masters of the Renaissance, and he had also an opportunity of continuing these studies, in the rich collections of Painting and Sculpture belonging to his patron Vincenzo Gonzaga himself. At the Louvre we find excellent drawings made by Rubens after Michelangelo's *Prophets* in the Sixtine Chapel. His attempts to impart to his own creations something of the Titanic grandeur of the great Florentine are clearly visible in a drawing in the Albertina collection in Vienna (Fig. 2), representing his two patrons, *Saint Peter and Saint Paul.* It is most interesting to examine closely the manner in which Rubens set to work when copying Italian Masters. His copies of the portrait of Isabella d'Este, now in the Museum of Art-History at Vienna: and of a young Venetian lady at Dresden, both after Titian, clearly show how minutely Rubens had studied that great colourist, and how at the same time he never lost his own individuality. For his works are not merely copies, but rather faithful translations into his own language of colour and form; especially the Dresden picture, where one may even detect in the fair Venetian something of his own Flemish ideals of beauty.

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On other occasions Rubens treated his subject even more freely; as for instance in his *Triumph of Julius Caesar* in the National Gallery: a sketch intended to be a free interpretation of a portion of the fine cartoons by Andrea Mantegna, now at Hampton Court. The young artist seems to have been also attracted by antique marbles and especially by old Greek and

Fig. 11. Abraham and Melchisedek. Drawing in the Albertina at Vienna. After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York. (To page 22.)

Roman portrait-busts. It was as if the cold marble awoke to life before his soul: and it was under such impressions that he executed those translations of ancient portraits which in 1638 were multiplied by Vosterman, P. Pontius, H. Witdoek and Schelte a Bolswert (Figs. 4—5). The thorough grasp that Rubens acquired of the classical beauty of old marbles is best proved by the profiles of a Roman couple, now in the collection of Prince Liechtenstein in Vienna (Fig. 6). There are also in the Albertina fine

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Fig. 12. VICTORY CROWNING A HERO. In the Pinakothek at Munich. After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 22.)

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male and female heads drawn from the antique, with studies for folded hands on the same sheat (Fig. 7). Side by side with these vigorous drawings, we should also mention the noble sketch of an old man with a beard, which probably served as a model for some holy bishop and well illustrates the method employed by the young Rubens in his studies from life (Fig. 8).

In 1603 he was sent to Spain by the Duke of Mantua. It seems that he considered the artist the fittest personage to deliver certain presents intended for King Philip III. and his minister the Duke of Lerma. The voyage was not favoured with fine weather, for it rained uncessantly for twenty days. Only a portion of the gifts, which included a carriage with seven Neapolitan horses, could be delivered uninjured; whilst the other part with the pictures painted by Rubens for the Spanish court were entirely ruined through the rain. The proposal of the Mantuan Ambassador that the pictures should be restored with the assistance of some Spanish painter, was firmly rejected by Rubens who declared, "that he did not choose to be associated with any one else". The circumstance that the interview with the King was delayed, enabled him however not only with his own hands to restore his damaged pictures, but also to paint two new ones:— *Heraclitus* and *Democritus*, the *Weeping and the Laughing Philosophers;* which two pictures are still in the Madrid Gallery. After he had accomplished his mission to the King of Spain he was employed until the following autumn by the Duke of Lerma, of whom he painted an equestrian portrait, besides thirteen single figures: *Christ and his Twelve Apostles.* These last are also still in the Madrid Gallery, but the figure of *Christ* himself has disappeared. Later replicas of these thirteen pictures are to be found at the Palazzo Rospigliosi in Rome, while a number of drawings for them are in the Albertina at Vienna (Fig. 9). The excellent portrait of a Franciscan priest, now in the Munich Pinakothek, is said also to have been painted in Spain (Fig. 10). At the beginning of 1604 Rubens returned to Mantua, where his chief work during that and the following year as the completion of a triptych for the Jesuit-Church. The centre-piece represented the *Trinity,* the two wings the *Baptism* and *Transfiguration of Christ.* At the taking of Mantua by the French in 1797 these three pictures were carried away; but the centre-portion divided into two portions was subsequently brought back, and is now in the Public Library. The *Transfiguration* is in the Museum at Nancy, while the *Baptism,* much repainted, found its way in 1876 to the Gallery of Antwerp.

In the year 1605 the Emperor Rudolf II. commissioned Rubens to copy two pictures by Correggio. In 1606 he was again in Rome, where he began to paint an altar-piece for an Oratory just built, known as the new church *(Chiesa Nuova).* Before, however, he could finish it, he was recalled by the Duke of Mantua, in whose company in the following year he went to Genoa. Here he devoted special attention to the architecture of the town and, in order to improve the taste for building in his own country, conceived the idea, of making a collection of drawings of Genoese

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palace-architecture. This plan he subsequently carried out in conjunction with N. Rykemans; and a collection of etchings, including no less than 136 plates of the *"Palazzi di Genova"*, appeared at Antwerp in two separate

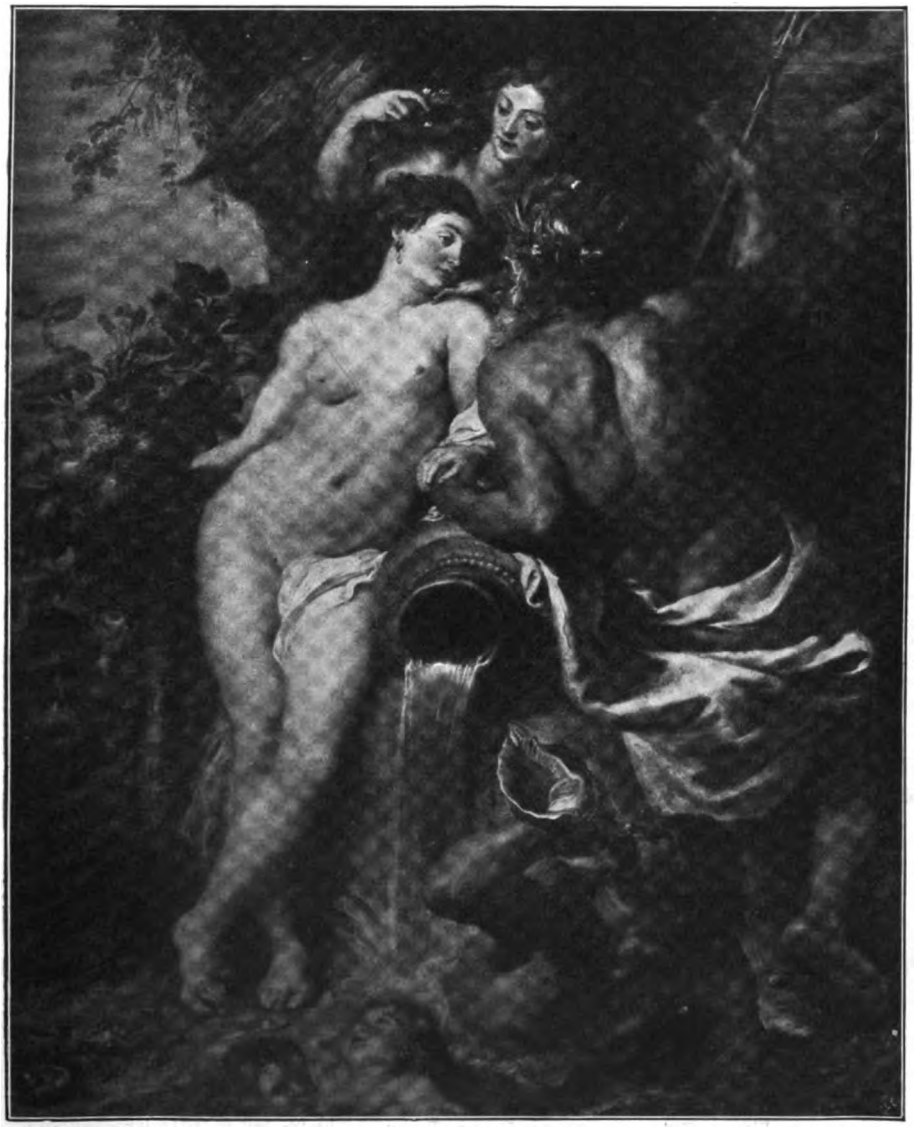

Fig. 13. The Rivergod Tiber (or Tigris) with the goddess of Plenty. In the Hermitage at St. Petersburg. After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 22.)

parts in the years 1613 and 1622 respectively. For the Jesuit-church (St. Ambrogio) at Genoa he painted — it is uncertain when — two altar-pieces: the *Circumcision* and *St. Ignatius healing a Demoniac and restoring to life Dead Children.* This latter, which is very large, is a splendid work.

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Fig. 14. RUBENS AND HIS WIFE ISABELLA BRANT. In the Pinakothek at Munich.
After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 26.)

Whilst in Milan on his return from Genoa and also when on his way to Spain, Rubens made careful drawings from Leonardo's *"Battle of Anghiari"* and from the celebrated *Cena,* both of which are preserved in the Louvre. It is also probable that he painted in the same city, in order to rival Leonardo, the Lord's Supper which is now in the Brera Collection.

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Fig. 15. The Ildefonso Altar. In the Imperial Gallery at Vienna. (To page 30.)

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The fact that in 1607 the Archduke Albrecht requested the Duke of Mantua to send back to him his own subject Peter Paul Rubens, then about 30 years of age, — shows how famous the artist had then become. Gonzaga replied, however, that he wished to keep him. He was no doubt right in adding that it was the painter's wish also to stay on in Italy. Numbers of his paintings prove how deeply he was impressed by the great Italian master-pieces and how much enjoyment he derived from them. We need only mention a picture in the Hermitage *Christ in the House of Simon,* which recalls Paolo Veronese: the versions of *Venus and Adonis* at the Hague, in Munich, and at St. Petersburg, influenced by Titian; and the *Pietà* in the Collection of Prince Liechtenstein, which shows how much he appreciated Caravaggio. Besides other Italian masters, Giulio Romano, whose most important works are at Mantua, had a decided influence on Rubens. This is clearly shown in some of his pictures and drawings (Fig. 11). Nevertheless he understood how to assimilate all these impressions and influences and work them up independantly, without losing his own originality.

One of the pictures that he painted for the Duke of Mantua, — now in the Dresden Gallery —, represents, it would seem, the *Apotheosis* of that Prince: a young hero victorious over Envy and Discord receives from the Goddess of Victory a Crown of Bay. Rubens dealt with the same subject a variety of times, but it is impossible to say positively whether this hero is really meant to represent some known personage or not. We find similar pictures differing but slightly from each other in the collections at Vienna, Cassel and Munich (Fig. 12). If such allegories have little interest for us at the present day, they were much appreciated at that time. To the same category belongs the effective piece of painting in the Pitti Gallery in Florence, which represents *Mars tearing himself from the arms of Venus in answer to the Call of the Furies.*

Among the pictures in Germany belonging to Rubens' Italian period, mention must be made of a very fine *St. Sebastian* in the Berlin Museum and an *Inebriated Hercules* in the Gallery at Cassel; a larger replica of which is at Dresden. In 1608 we find the artist again in Rome, during which visit he painted several works with direct reference to the Eternal city: — *a She-Wolf with the twins Romulus and Remus* — and a *Personification of the Tiber accompanied by the Goddess of Abundance.* The former is in the picture Gallery of the Capitol: the latter, which was painted for Prince Chigi, may be, according to the description given of it, identified with the fine picture now in the Hermitage at St. Petersburg, sometimes designated as *the Tiber,* sometimes, — on account of the tiger depicted on one side — also as *the Tigris.* The figure of *Abundance* is of singular beauty, such as is not often met with in the women of his later period (Fig. 13). He worked also at the Oratory of the Chiesa Nuova, completing the altar-piece, which he had, as we have already seen, begon two years before. When however it was set up in its place, the light proved so unfavourable to it, that he resolved to replace it by another work. He therefore painted the three pictures

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which are still to be seen over the high-altar, representing the *Queen of Heaven* with three Saints on either hand. He reserved for himself however the picture that he had first painted, in which, besides the two Patrons of the church, he had represented the Virgin with other Saints and Pope Gregory. This painting he subsequently brought back to his own country and placed above the grave of his mother.

Fig. 16. The Elevation of the Cross.
Drawing in black and red chalk on green paper, washed and hightened with white. In the Louvre at Paris.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 34.)

In the autumn of 1608 he received alarming accounts of the health of this beloved parent: wherefore he at once took leave of the Duke of Mantua and travelled back by the shortest route to Antwerp. But he arrived too late to find her alive: for she had already been borne to her last resting-place in the church of St. Michael. We are told that the disconsolate son shut himself up for several months in the abbey of St. Michael. This Roman picture, to which headed a Latin inscription, and set up over her grave, is however no longer to be found there. It was carried off by the French to Grenoble.

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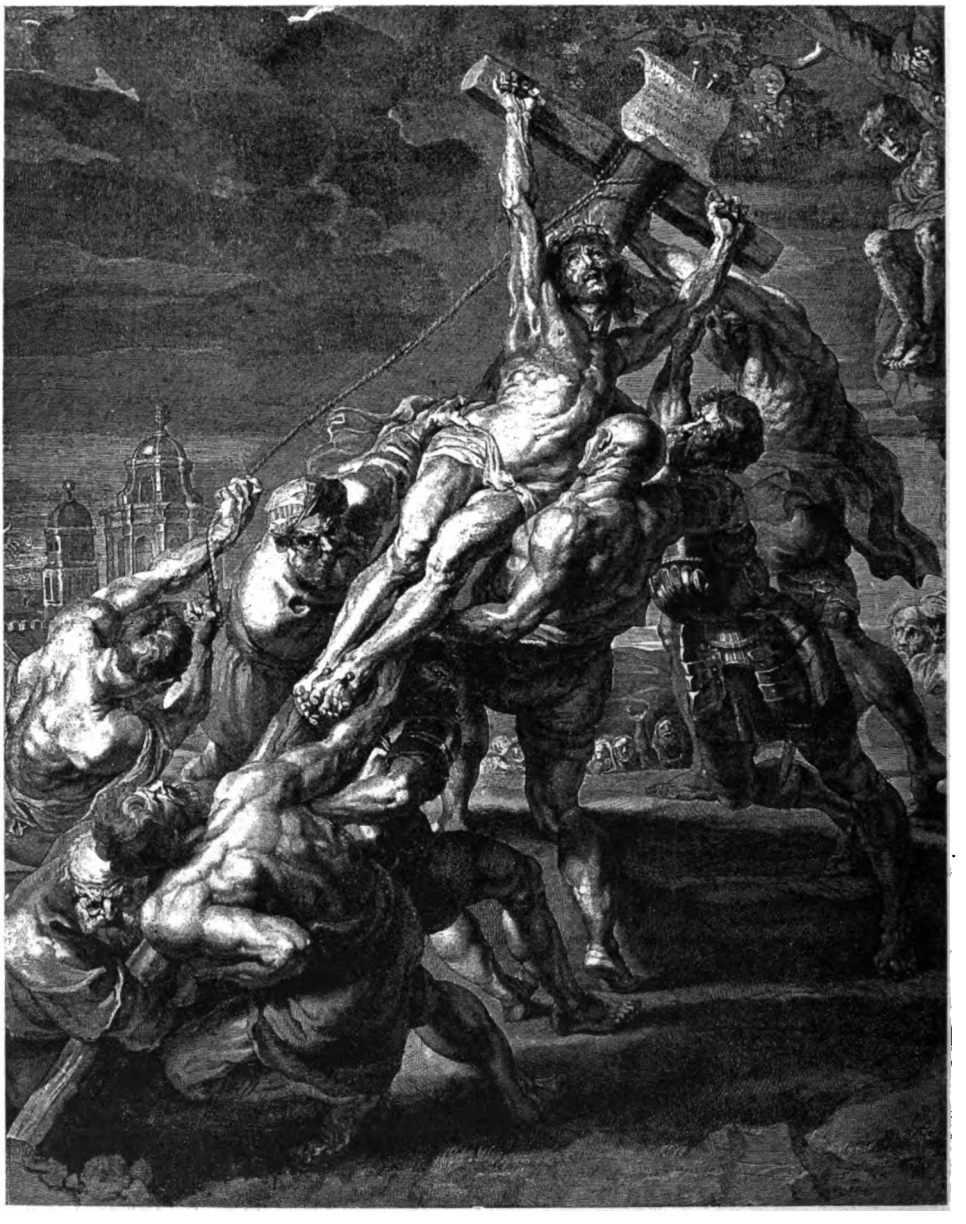

Fig. 17. The Elevation of the Cross. From an engraving by Witdoek. (To page 34.)

Rubens intended to return at once back to Mantua: but the Archduke Albrecht and the Infanta Isabella objected to the departure of their celebrated subject. They therefore commissioned him to paint their portraits, and on the 23th of September 1609, they created him Court-painter, with all the prerogatives attached to that title, and an annuity of £ 500 Flemish. Thus the painter was at last fettered to his native land. Although he executed numerous important works in Italy, his sojourn there can only be regarded

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Fig. 18. The Descent from the Cross. In the Antwerp Museum.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 34.)

as a time of apprenticeship, it was on returning to his own country that he really discovered his talent and entered upon that period of his life during which he achieved his immortal fame.

An armistice of twelve years, concluded in 1609, gave peace at length to the sorely tried Netherlands. The true cultivation of Art now commenced

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and no longer met with opposition; wherefore the industrious artist found much employment for his talents. It was not only the Archduke and Archduchess, who prevented Rubens return to Italy, but there was another tie also. Philip Rubens, the only one of his four brothers who had survived, held the office of Secretary of State at Antwerp. Two portrais of him by Peter-Paul exist, one of which is in the Pinakothek at Munich; whilst the other representing both brothers with the celebrated Justus Lipsius

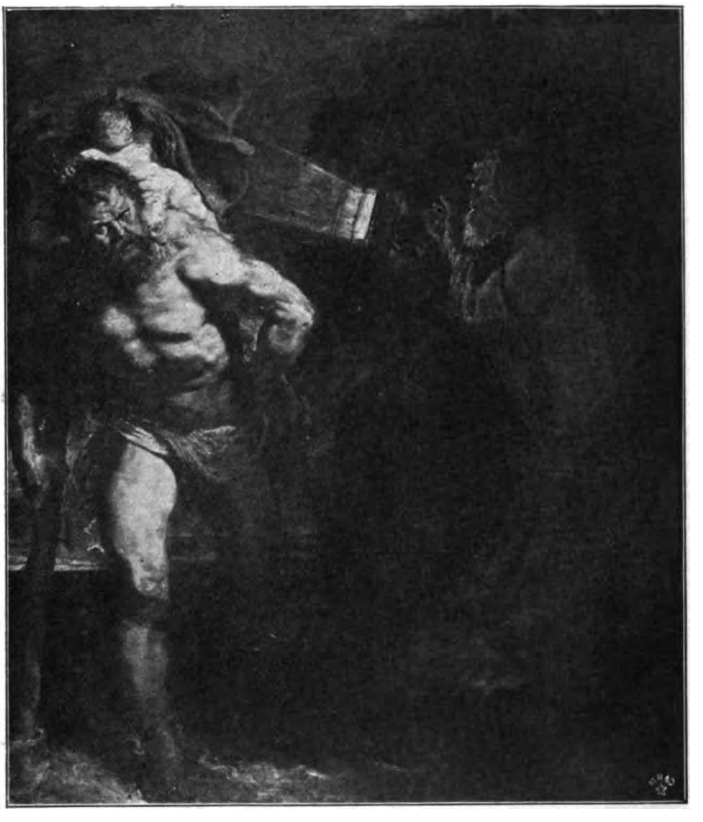

Fig. 19. St. Christophorus. In the Pinakothek at Munich.
After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 36.)

and Hugo Grotius, is in the Pitti Palace at Florence. Philip Rubens was allied by marriage with Johann Brant, Town-Clerk of Antwerp. On the 13th of October 1607, his daughter Isabella, a delicate young beauty, whom her gallant uncle likened to the wife of Menelaus, was married to Peter Paul Rubens in the church of St. Michael. In a charming picture, now at the Pinakothek in Munich, the painter represents himself seated beside his young wife — a picture of conjugal bliss — under a bower of honey-suckle (Fig. 14): whilst another charming portrait of Isabella Brant, whose features henceforth can often be traced in various pictures by the artist, is to be found in the Uffizi Gallery at Florence.

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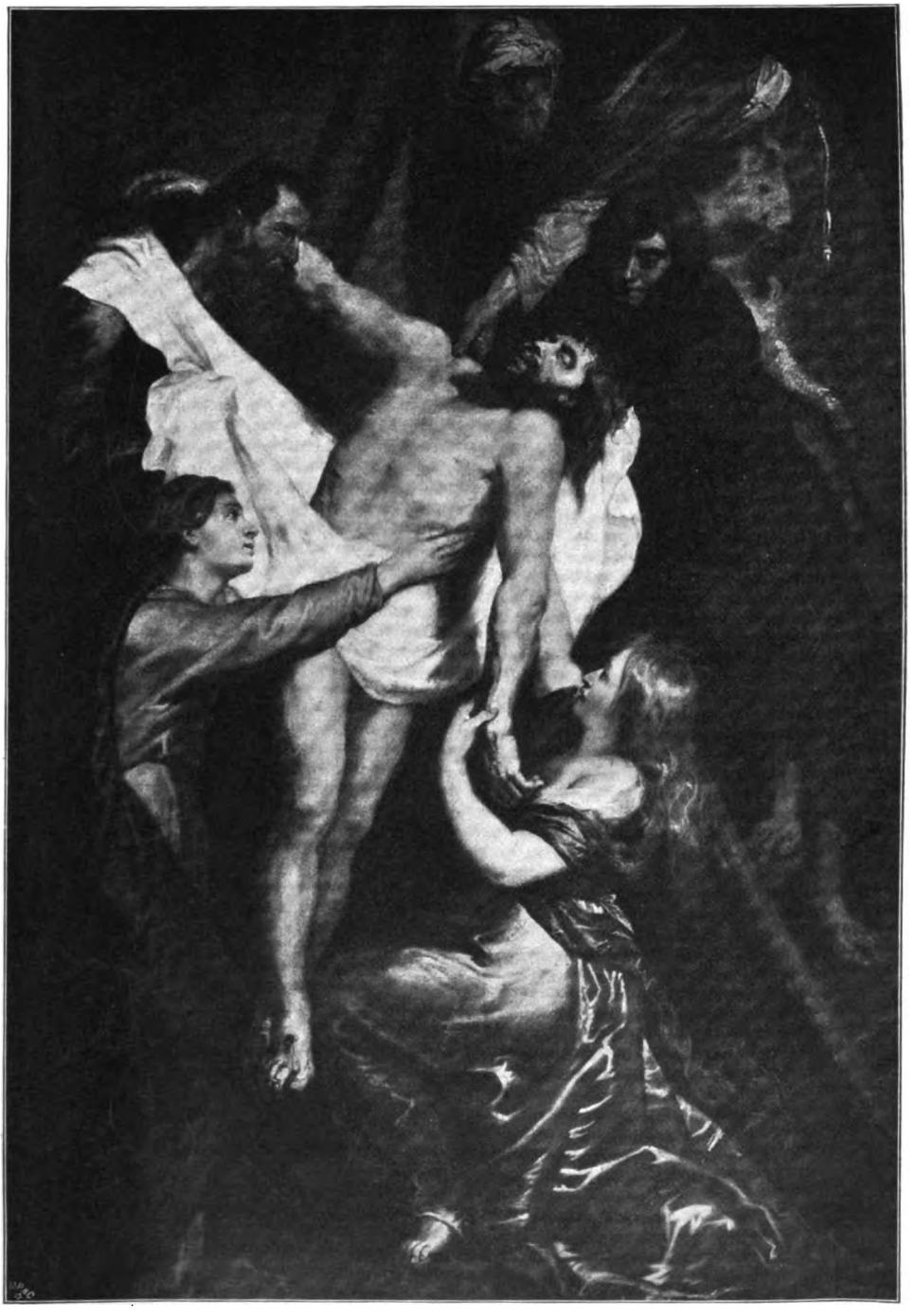

Fig. 20. The Descent from the Cross. In the Hermitage at St. Petersburg.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
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Rubens received his first important commission from the town of Antwerp: and painted for the Guildhall of that city the *Adoration of the Magi,* a large painting, brilliant in colour, which, however, did not long remain in the position intended for it; for in 1612 it was presented by the municipality to Count Oliva, in order to obtain his favour, who took it with him to Spain. When some time afterwards he ended his life on the scaffold, it passed into the possession of King Philip IV., and is now in the Museum

Fig. 21. Portrait of an Unknown Man. In the Gallery at Cassel.
After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 39.)

at Madrid. Commissioned about the same time by the reigning Prince of the Netherlands, Rubens executed another altar-piece, in which he displays himself at the height of his artistic developement. Archduke Albrecht had founded at Brussels in honour of St. Ildefonso an aristocratic Brotherhood, to whom he had given an altar in his own church dedicated to "St. James on the Kaltenberg". The painter received a commission to adorn this altar and, although but a commoner by birth, he was elected a member by this Brotherhood, all of whom were of noble lineage. To show his gratitude for so much honour, he painted this altar-piece without demanding any

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remuneration. He gave to it the shape of an Ancona: the centre-panel of which represented a *Miracle of St. Ildefonso,* illustrating the following tradition. St. Ildefonso, Archbishop of Toledo in the seventh century, defended with the utmost zeal the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.

Fig. 22. Perseus and Andromeda. In the Hermitage at St. Petersburg.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York. (To page 41.)

For this act the Queen of Heaven herself descended into his cathedral in visible shape and presented him with a mantle of celestial texture. The Archbishop is represented here on his knees before a throne, which occupies the centre of the picture, and from which Mary, with an expression of extreme

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benignity, extends to him the miraculous garment. Virgin-Saints stand on either side of the throne as ladies in waiting, whilst in a flood of light child-angels joyously hover around it. In the two wings the Archduke and his Archduchess on their knees, clad in royal robes, and with their Patrons

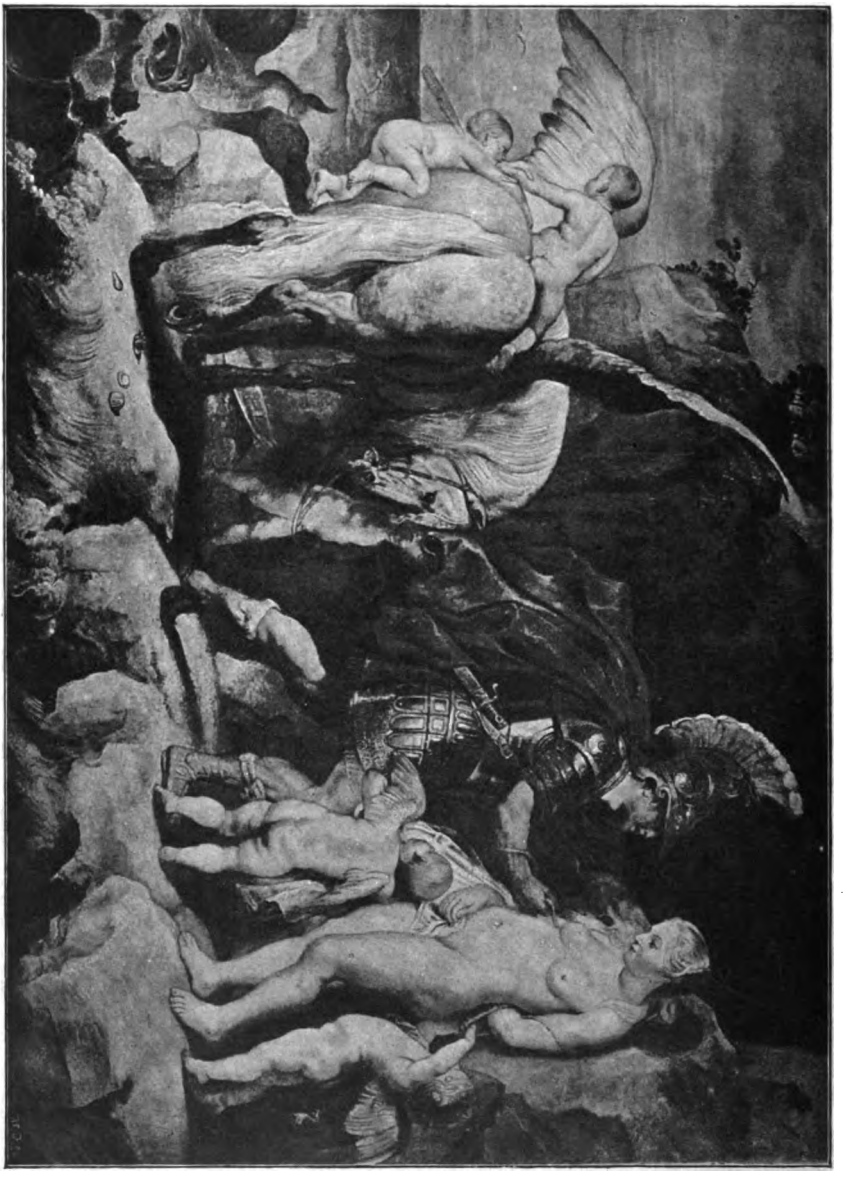

Fig. 23. Perseus and Andromeda. In the Berlin Museum. (To page 42.)

beside them, are awe-struck spectators of this miracle. St. Albert in Cardinal's robes protects the Archduke, while St. Clare attends the Archduchess, Clara Eugenia Isabella (Fig. 15). In this work Rubens has succeeded in uniting a marvellous *chiaro-oscuro*, with a brilliancy of colouring, which is almost

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Fig. 24. Studies of Putti. Pen and ink drawing in the Albertina at Vienna.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
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Fig. 25. MADONNA WITH THE HOLY INNOCENTS. In the Louvre.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 42.)

unique in the history of art. On the outer side of the two wings he also painted an idyllic Holy Family, known as the *Madonna under the Apple-Tree*. In 1641, this splendid altar-piece was removed to make way for a so-called miraculous picture; on which occasion both the wings were taken off,

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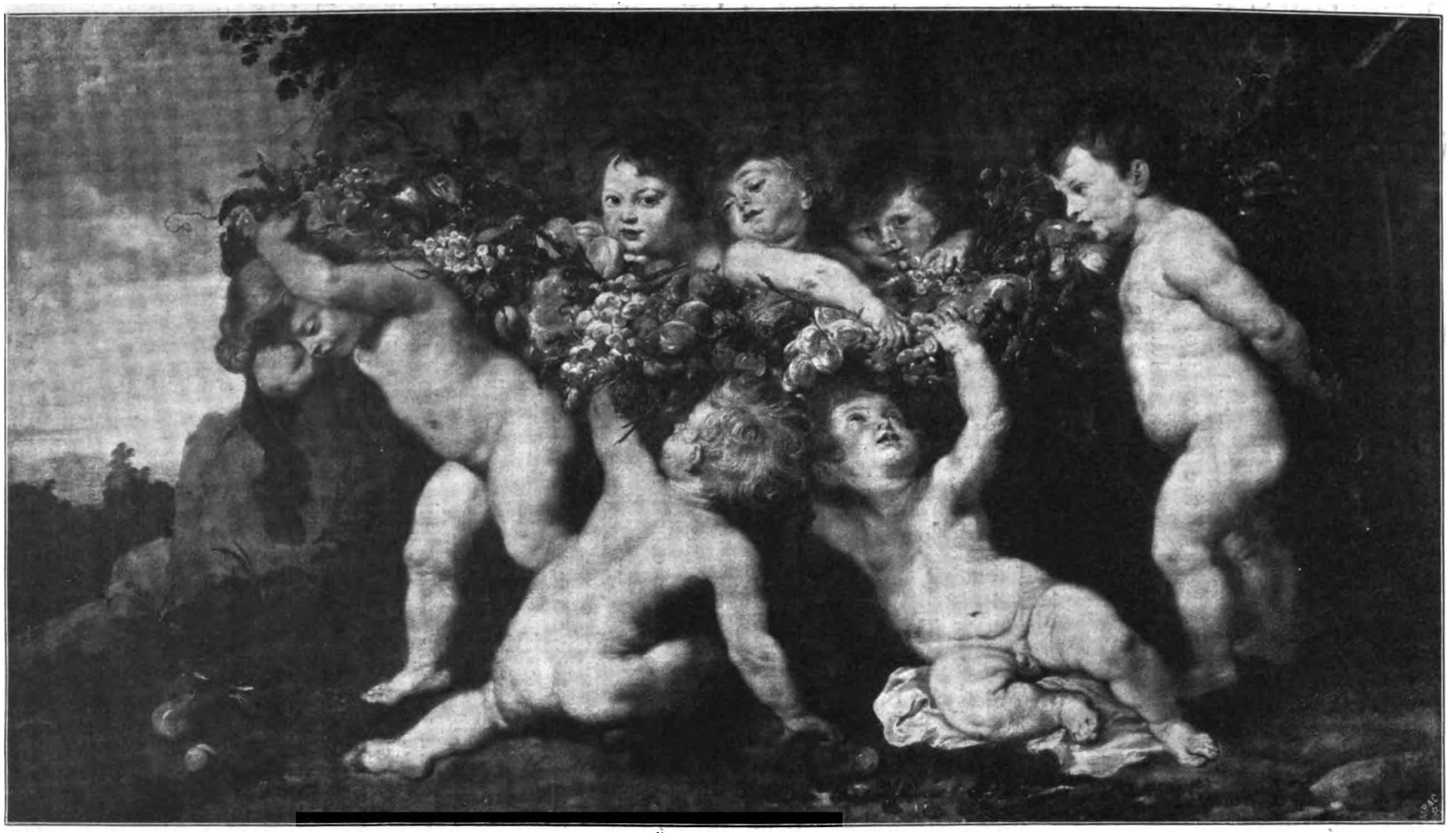

Fig. 26. THE GARLAND OF FRUIT. In the Pinakothek at Munich. After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 44.)

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in order to make a separate picture of the Holy Family above-mentioned. When in 1657, the order of St. Ildefonso ceased to exist, these pictures came into the possession of the monks of Kaltenberg. In order to raise fonds for rebuilding their church burnt down in 1743, the monks resolved to sell the pictures, which had fortunately been saved. In 1776 the Empress Maria Theresa, through the medium of her ambassador, Prince Starkenberg, bought them for 14,000 florins, whereby this masterpiece came to Vienna and found a place of honour the following year in the Belvedere Gallery; whence it has now been transferred to the Museum of Art-History.

In 1610 when, according to tradition, Rubens had completed the St. Ildefonso altar-piece, he executed another work for the Walpurgis-church at Antwerp. This is the celebrated *Elevation of the Cross,* now in the transept of the cathedral at Antwerp. There is in the Louvre a drawing for this picture, giving an idea of the whole composition which, when finally executed, was divided into three parts: *The Elevation of the Cross* in the centre: on the right the Weeping Women: on the left the Roman Centurion (Fig. 16). The central-subject has been reproduced in numberless ancient and modern prints (Fig. 17). A thick darkness covers the sky; whilst the Saviour, extended upon the Cross, turns his suffering face towards the last rays of the setting sun. The whole attention of the spectator is attracted by this figure alone; for all the other figures are unimportant. Their whole attention appears to be directed to raising the heavy cross, and preventing it from slipping from its intended position. On one of the wings may be seen the Centurion, surrounded by other men on horseback, giving his orders with all the pride of a Roman official: behind him are the two malefactors. On the other wing is a striking group of the Mourning Women, amid whom St. John supports the Holy Mother overwhelmed with grief. Originally there was a lunette above the central-portion of this Ancona, representing God the Father, toward whom the Crucified One was directing his gaze: and also a predella consisting of three small pictures. These pieces were sold separately in the 18th century by order of the church-authorities.

A still more powerful picture is the *Descent from the Cross,* which the master painted two years later as a pendant to the *Elevation* and which is likewise in the transept of the Antwerp Cathedral. It was commissioned in 1611 by the Rifle-corps-Guild for a sum of 2400 florins. The records of payment are still in existence, and it is amusing to see that on three occasions, while the work was proceeding, 9 florins, 10 stübers were spent on wine for the master's pupils: and that, after the completion of the picture, 8 florins 10 stübers were paid for a pair of gloves as a present for his wife. Rubens' *Descent from the Cross* is a well known and much admired picture. The dead Christ lowered in a white sheet is surrounded by His disciples and friends, who support His body, whilst near at hand stands His Mother. Her head is shrouded in a mourning veil; she is overcome with grief and supported by the other two Maries. This painting was famous from the day of its completion: and may be considered perhaps

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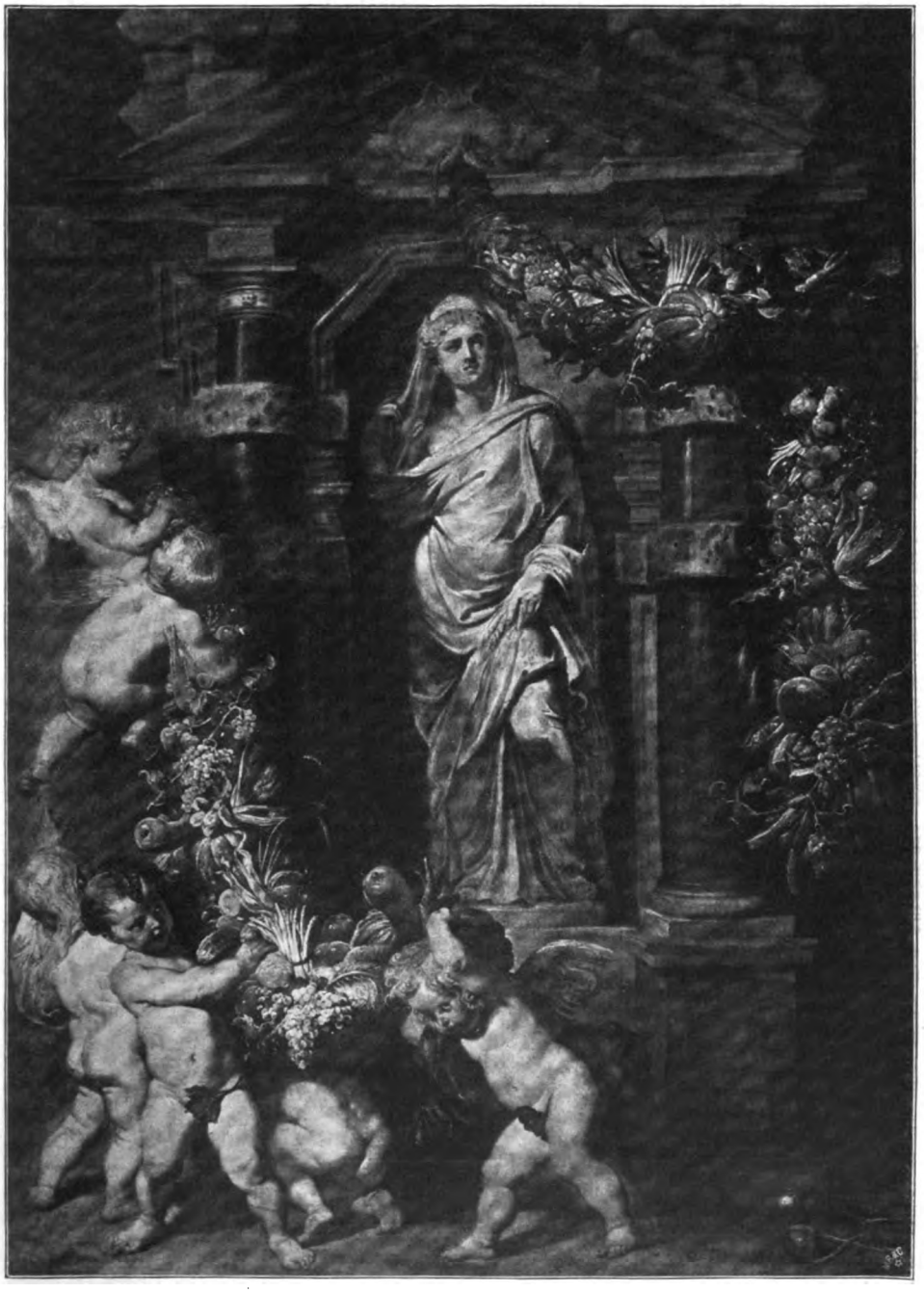

Fig. 27. The Picture of Ceres. In the Hermitage, St. Petersburg.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 44.)

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more than any other work, a landmark in the History of Art. From the date of its completion Dutch and Flemish painters realized that it was no longer necessary to go to Italy to see first rate works of art. On the two wings are painted the *Visitation* and *Presentation in the Temple:* and on

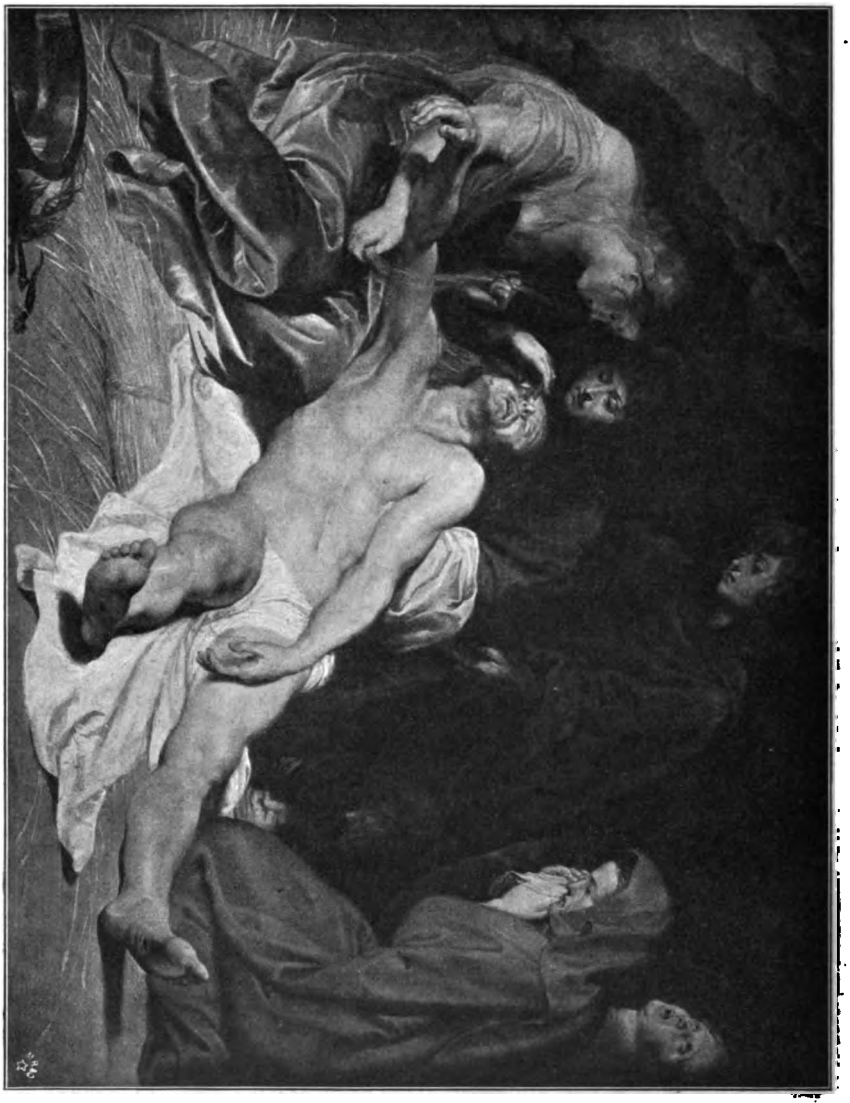

Fig. 28. The Lamentation for Christ. In the Imperial Museum at Vienna. After a photograph from the original by J. Löwy, Vienna. (To page 46.)

their outer side *St. Christopher.* This latter subject Rubens repeated again in a picture now at Munich (Fig. 19). The idea of Christ being thus carried is the binding link in all four representations: and the one main thought that runs through the whole altar-piece: First, as the *Incarnate Son of God* in the *Visitation;* again, in the *Presentation in the Temple;* then, in the *Descent from the Cross;* and, lastly, as *Ruler of the World* on the shoulder

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of *St. Christopher*. Tradition tells us that the Rifle-corps-Guild only commissioned the artist to paint a St. Christopher as the bearer of Christ, but that he of his own accord thus dilated on the subject.

Both these pictures, the *Elevation* and the *Descent from the Cross,* have only occupied their present positions since 1816; for they were carried

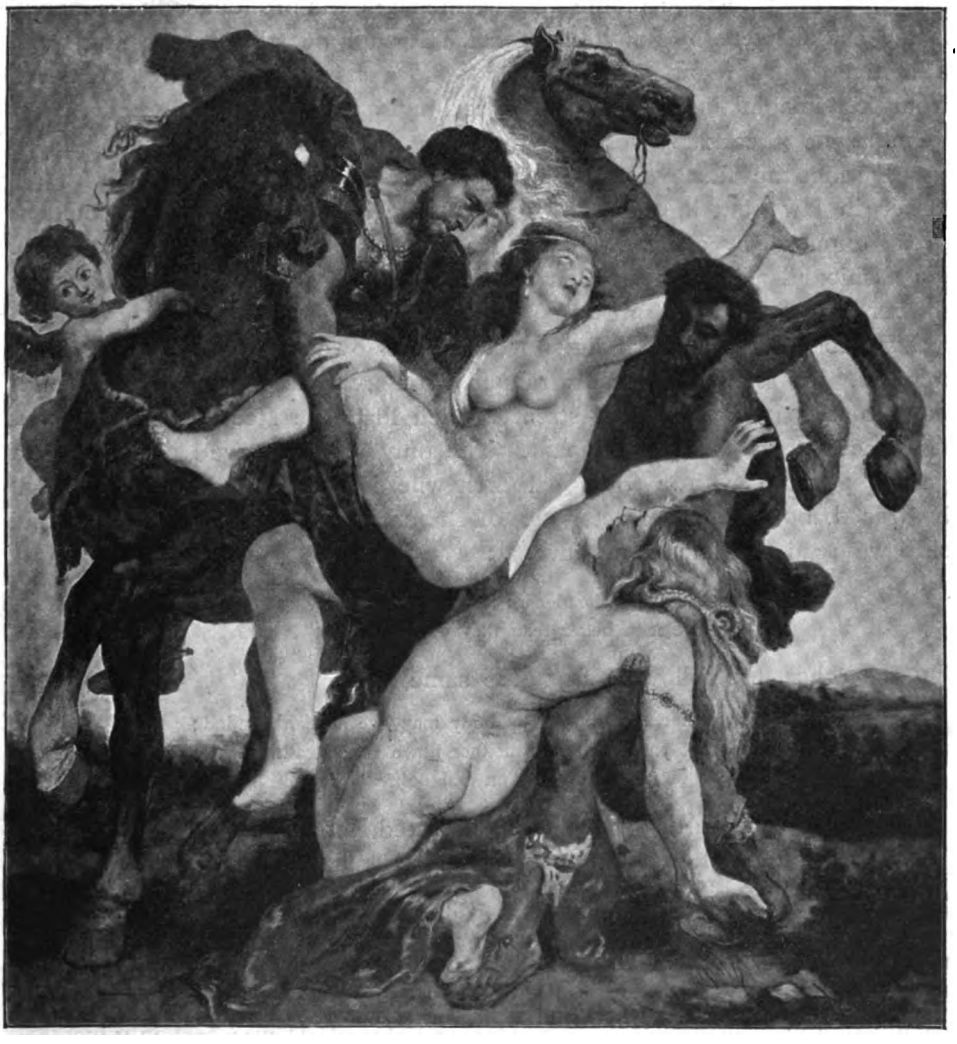

Fig. 29. The Rape of the Daughters of Leucippos by Castor and Pollux. In the Pinakothek at Munich. After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 47.)

off to Paris in 1794. A replica of the latter picture with certain variations is in the Hermitage at St. Petersburg (Fig. 20). Although as a whole it is inferior to the picture at Antwerp, it has nevertheless great merit. Great attention is bestowed upon the figure of St. Mary Magdalen, for whom the artist having a predilection, created a special type. This attractive figure, —

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a maiden with a fine complexion and very fair hair — which we encounter for the first time in the *Descent from the Cross* at Antwerp, frequently recurs in his paintings and not invariably as Mary Magdalen. It has often been stated that this very Flemish type of beauty is that of the artist's first wife; but, setting aside some national Flemish peculiarities, it has no resemblance whatever to the darkhaired Isabella Brant. It cannot be assumed however, that this favourite type of the master, in spite of its pronounced personality, is the actual likeness of any one model. Through decades of years this same attractive figure reappears unchanged; no matter whether freely created from his imagination, or whether recalling an image transfigured by remembrance, it certainly seems to have been Rubens' ideal of female beauty.

During the first years of his married life the painter lived with his father in law: but in 1611 he took a house of his own, reconstructed at great expense by altering a large mansion that he had acquired in 1610. He fashioned a sumptuous Palace in the late Renaissance style, which he further furnished with princely splendour; and in the garden erected a richly adorned circular building to contain his own art-treasures and antique marbles. His studio also was arranged with great magnificence. The building situated near the broad street, called Place de Meir, shows now but few traces of its famous occupant. The only well-preserved piece being a garden-pavilion with a triumphal arch where on two inscriptions can still be traced, both very characteristic of Rubens' philosophy of life. On one side we read the lines from Juvenal:

> "Trust to the gods to care for us and our prosperity;
> They love men better than they do themselves."

On the other, the following from the same poet:

> "Pray that in your healthy body may live a healthy mind;
> And that your heart may neither flinch from death
> Nor be given over to passion and desire."

Contemporary artists have often depicted Rubens' establishment. Even Van Dyck did not think it unworthy of his genius to illustrate his masters' dining room; a painting now in the Museum at Stockholm.

The master's endeavour to introduce Italian Renaissance taste into his native town was not wholly unsuccessful, and many of the 17th century buildings in Antwerp show this influence in their elaborate architecture. The stately façade of the Jesuit Church built between 1611—1621 was certainly inspired by him. It was natural that many pupils should flock to him as soon as he had settled in that city. In fact there were such a number desirous of studying under him that he was obliged to pass them on to other painters; and, indeed, as he wrote to a friend of his, an engraver, he had to reject hundreds of pupils, amongst whom were even acquaintances of his own and his wife's. His nephew Philip has given us interesting accounts of his habits and his daily life. He used to rise, summer and winter, at five o'clock, and went every morning to hear early mass. In his later years he was only prevented

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from doing this by gout. Returning from church he at once commenced his painting; and whilst so employed he had books, such as Plutarch and Seneca, read aloud to him; for he possessed the gift of listening without diverting his attention from his work. It is also said that he was very moderate in eating and drinking and that his regular relaxation after his day's work, interrupted only by one short and simple meal, was towards evening to take a ride on one of his fine Spanish horses. The evenings

Fig. 30. Two Satyrs. In the Pinakothek at Munich.
After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 47.)

were devoted to his friends; for he kept an open and hospitable house and specially enjoyed intercourse with learned men. According to one of his biographers his house was regulated with the strictness almost of a convent.

Rubens painted in 1612 a picture of the *Resurrection,* with figures of Saints and Angels on the side wings, for his friend Balthasar Moretus. This work was intended to be placed over the tomb of Moretus' father in the Antwerp Cathedral, and it hangs there still. At that time the artist was mainly occupied in painting sacred subjects; but nevertheless found time for a number of other works: and it is evident also that some of these were portraits. Fig. 21 is the likeness

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of an unknown man painted about 1609—1610. Above all he enjoyed representing scenes from Antique Mythology. Indeed he would not have belonged to the educated class of his time had he not possessed as thorough a knowledge

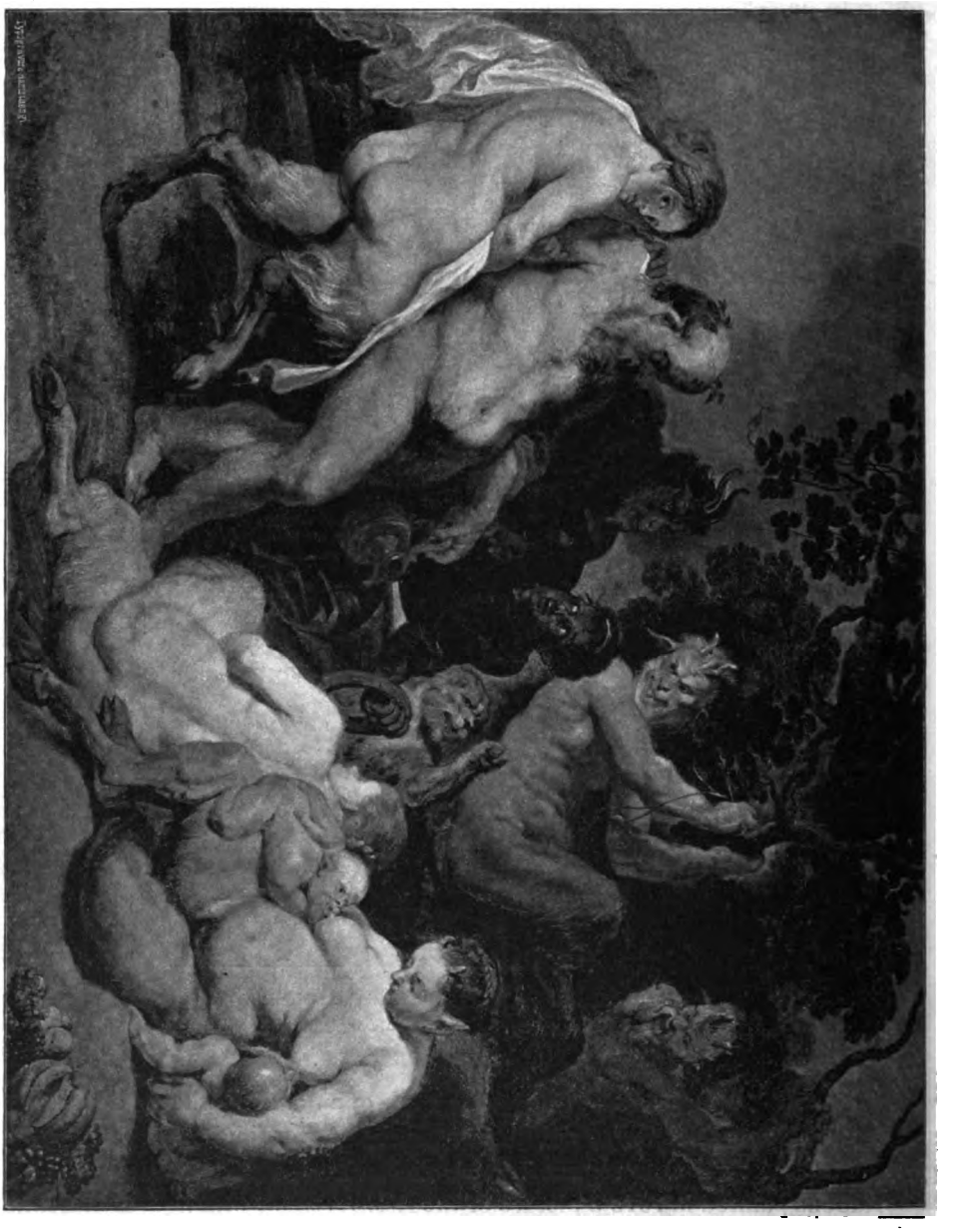

Fig. 31. Bacchanalia. In the Liechtenstein Gallery at Vienna. After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 47.)

of the histories of Roman and Greek gods and heroes as he had of the Gospels. Two different representations of the *Liberation of Andromeda,* apparently painted about the same period (1610—1615), rank among his happiest mythological creations. One of these is in the Hermitage at St. Petersburg; in

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which against the dark background of a precipice the hero is seen advancing. Upon his waving locks Victory places a crown of bay, whilst around the figures of the rescued maiden, Victory, the winged horse and the fearful Gorgon's head hover a number of laughing cupids. In the foreground we may observe

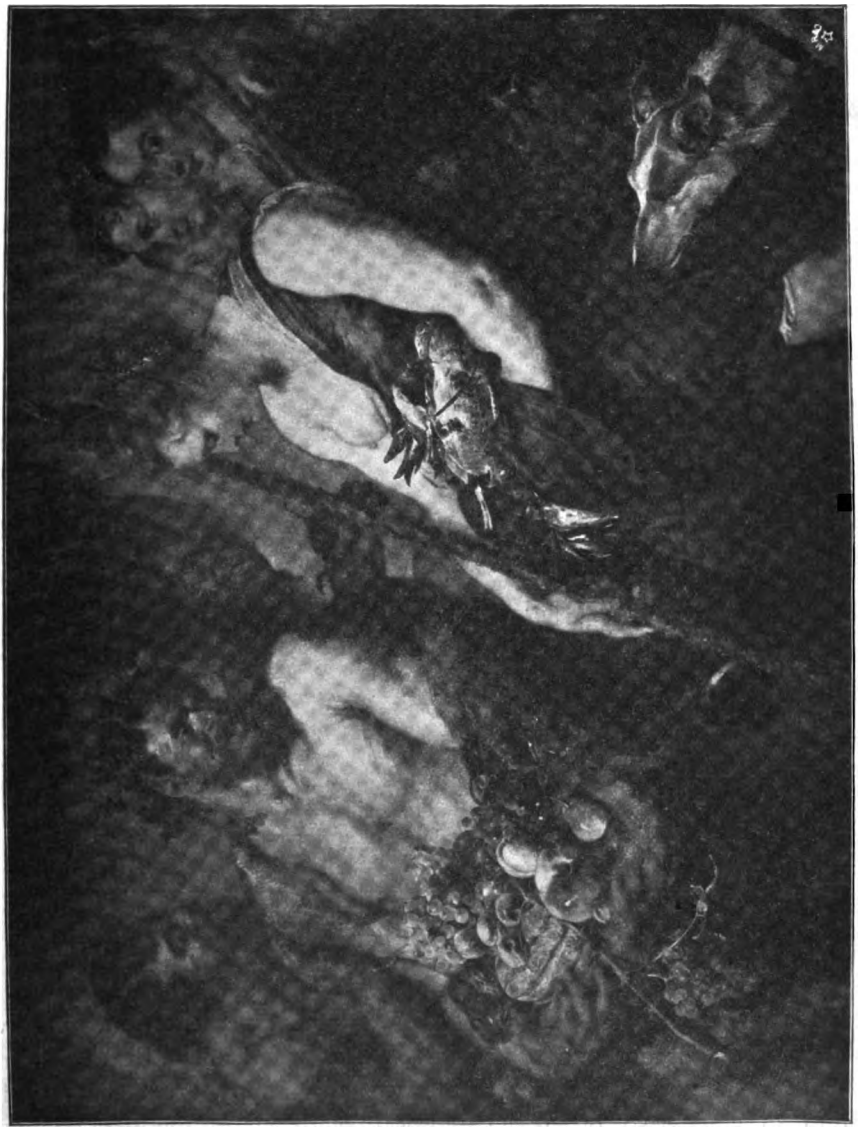

Fig. 32. Faun and Diana (The Gifts of Autumn). In the Picture Gallery at Dresden.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York. (To page 47.)

a portion of the dead monster, represented somewhat indistinctly in order not to interfere with the joyous impression of the rest of the composition (Fig. 22). More beautiful still is the other picture in the Berlin Museum. It is true that the figure of Andromeda is here perhaps less attractive; but on the other hand, the cupids, especially those laying around the white horse

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are more fascinating. In the spacious landscape overhung by a shadowy atmosphere the deep blue sea spreads beyond the rocks: where, between two cliffs, the monster convulsively expires. The wide perspective, the fine horse, the shining armour of the hero, the graceful figure of the girl, and the delicious infant heads, together form an admirable poem, quite unique in harmony of colour (Fig. 23).

Fig. 33. The Betrayal of Samson. In the Pinakothek at Munich.
After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 47)

Rubens always possessed great talent in the representation of the winsome grace of cherubs and *putti*. In 1611 his wife Isabella Brant presented him with a daughter: and it was perhaps this happy event that specially led him to sketch so often the figures of children. Among collection of drawings at the Albertina, is a sheet covered with hastily-drawn, but none the less charming, Cupids in a great variety of attitudes (Fig. 24). They are probably sketches for the charming picture painted at this period: *Mary with the Infant Christ surrounded by playful Cherubs* (Fig. 25); originally no doubt an altar-piece, but now in the Gallery of the Louvre. He also designed a number of fascinating *putti* entwined in a garland of fruit:

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Fig. 34. MELEAGER AND ATALANTA. In the Pinakothek at Munich. After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 47.)

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Fig. 35. LADY AND CHILD (probably Isabella Brant with her son Albrecht).
In the Picture Gallery at Dresden.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 48.)

a work now in the Pinakothek at Munich (Fig. 26). The magnificent garland of fruit which they bear was probably executed by Jan Breughel, one of his most loyal friends. A similar idea is to be found in a delightful sketch in the Hermitage Collection, known as the *Statue of Ceres*. Here exquisite baby-figures crowd around a niche containing a figure of the goddess and adorn it with garlands of fruit (Fig. 27). It is possible, that this fine sketch was originally intended as a design for a titlepage, such as in 1603 Rubens commenced making for the books published by his friend, Balthasar Moretus.

There were at that time a great many skilful engravers, who reproduced the designs of Rubens' both in painting and drawing: and very many of these were also multiplied by etchings. The art of engraving, which in other countries had become debased to a very low level, made rapid progress in

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the Netherlands, profitting greatly by the work of the artist. Woodcarving also was greatly benefitted by the reproduction of his ideas; so that from this period works appear of real artistic merit in that branch of art.

If we look for dates on Rubens' pictures we may find a mythological painting of *Jupiter and Callisto* in the Gallery at Cassel, dated 1613; and another delicious little night-piece, representing the *Flight into Egypt* in the same collection, dated 1614. This latter much recalls a picture by Adam Elsheimer, whose acquaintance Rubens made in Rome. The same date 1614 is also attached to a small and highly finished *Pietà* in the Museum at Vienna. The shoulders of the dead Christ, much foreshortened, rest against the knees of the Madonna, who, with loving care, closes the glazing eyes of her dead Son. His right arm is supported by Mary Magdalen,—the favourite female Saint of the painter,—whilst in the foreground kneel the other Maries

Fig. 36. Head of a Child (Rubens' eldest daughter). In the Liechtenstein Gallery at Vienna. After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co, Dornach, Paris and New-York.
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weeping bitterly. Beside the Holy Mother stands the impressive figure of St. John (Fig. 28). The Museum at Antwerp possesses a larger replica of this picture with a landscape background by the "velvet" Breughel. As a rule, however, inscribed dates are very rare on pictures by Rubens. Moreover, they do not tell us much; for the master's power, when settled in Antwerp

Fig. 37. The Virgin Mary with the Infant Christ in a Wreath of Flowers. (The flowers painted by Jan Breughel.) In the Pinakothek at Munich. After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 48.)

was so fully developed, and, throughout the whole of his artistic career, he remained so true to himself, that it is very difficult — almost impossible in fact — with most of his works, to fix even approximately the period of their execution.

Mythology always seemed to give him new ideas: and he enjoyed representing wild scenes, such as the *Abduction of Orithyia by Boreas,* the North-Wind, now in the Academy of Vienna, or *the Rape of the Daughters*

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of Leucippos by Castor and Pollux, now in the Munich Pinakothek (Fig. 29). He threw special enthusiasm into his groups of *Diana* and of *Bacchus:* and he revelled in representing the sports of woodland deities (Figs. 30 and 31); depicting their boisterous ways and inebriatedly amorous gambols with great gusto. At one time he paints them accompanied by voluptuous naiads, at another by graceful and timid nymphs; whilst sometimes, for the sake of contrast, he introduces into the composition even the chaste Diana herself (Fig. 32). He deals repeatedly with the legend of *Meleager and Atalanta,* a subject which gave him the opportunity of representing manly strenght and

Fig. 38. The Boar Hunt. In the Pinakothek at Munich.
After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 51.)

womanly charm in close contrast. In the Gallery at Cassel there is a splendid subject with a half-figure of Meleager presenting the bristling head of the Calydonian boar to the beautiful huntress, whilst Envy lurks in the background.

Another representation of the same subject is at Munich, rendered even more attractive by the addition of magnificent grey-hounds and a fine landscape (Fig. 34).

It was on rarer occasions that he approached subjects of the Old Testament. Amongst these are the sketches of Ahasverus and Esther, designs for the decoration of a ceiling, and the splendid painting of *Samson and Delilah,* both in the Pinakothek at Munich (Fig. 33).

In 1614 his eldest son was born. He was named after the Archduke Albrecht, who stood sponsor for him. In spite of the coat of arms at the

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back of the composition, we may recognise in the fascinating portrait in the Dresden Gallery of a lady with a baby on her lap (Fig. 35), Frau Isabella, her face somewhat thin and worn, and her infant son. The head of a child in the Liechtenstein Collection at Vienna, is, no doubt, a likeness of Rubens' eldest daughter who, with her clear almond-shaped eyes and amiably expressive mouth, seems the very image of her mother (Fig. 36). The charming

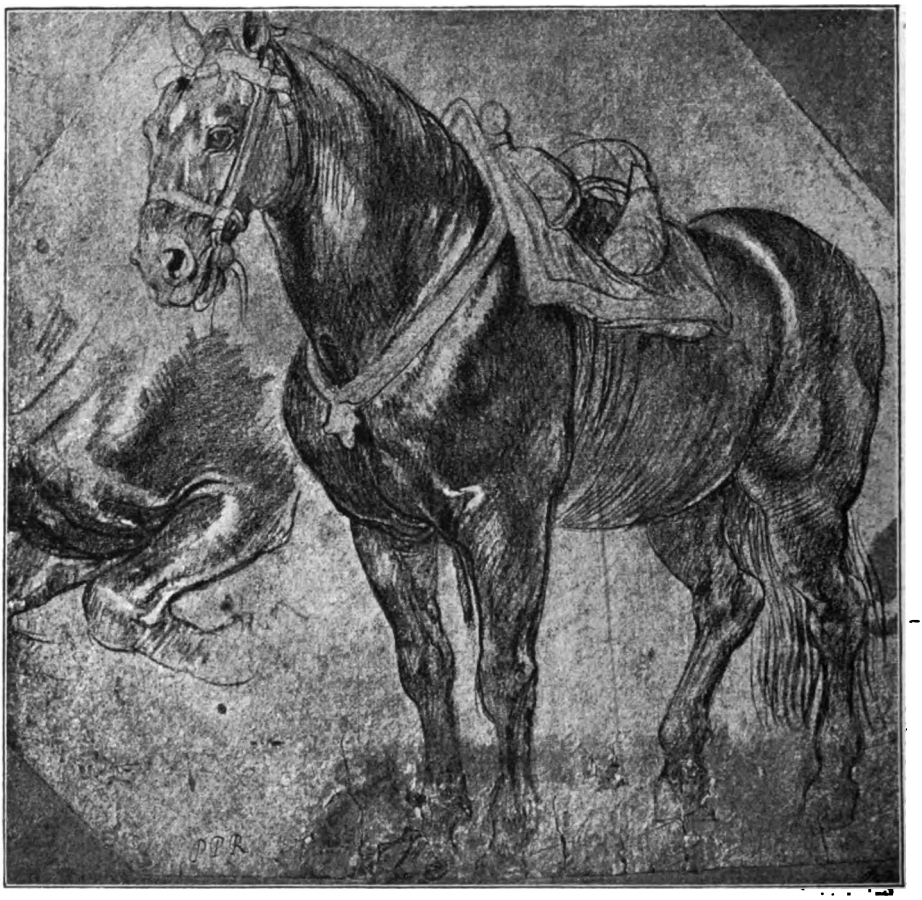

Fig. 39. Study of a Horse. Drawing in the Albertina at Vienna.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 52.)

Madonna surrounded by Cupids and enclosed in a wreath of flowers, — the latter a masterpiece of Breughel, — is unmistakeably also a portrait of Isabella and the infant Albrecht (Fig. 37).

An ever increasing number of commissions compelled the master to avail himself of the help of his pupils in executing his pictures, especially in large compositions and replicas: but he himself always put in the final touches; thus giving them the stamp of his genius. The pupils entered into the ideas of their masters as far as their respective abilities allowed.

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Fig. 40. THE LION HUNT. In the Pinakothek at Munich. After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 53.)

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Fig. 41. The Resurrection of the Just. In the Pinakothek at Munich.
After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 56.)

His powerful influence acted, not only on young art-students desirous of learning from him, but also on contemporary workers: and even on his former teachers. He often worked on the same canvas with other painters, with whom he was linked by terms of friendship. Besides painting in company with the above-mentioned Johann Breughel, he frequently collaborated with Franz Snyders, unsurpassed as a painter of animals, who, born at Antwerp

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Fig. 42. The Punishment of the Unjust. In the Pinakothek at Munich.
After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 56.)

in 1579, was about his own age. In the Galleries of Dresden and Munich for example, are vigourous scenes from boar-hunts, the joint work of Rubens and Snyders (Fig. 38). It was, however, only for expedition, and because he was so overburdened with work, not of necessity, that he thus sought the help of his friend in painting animals. He was himself a first rate animal

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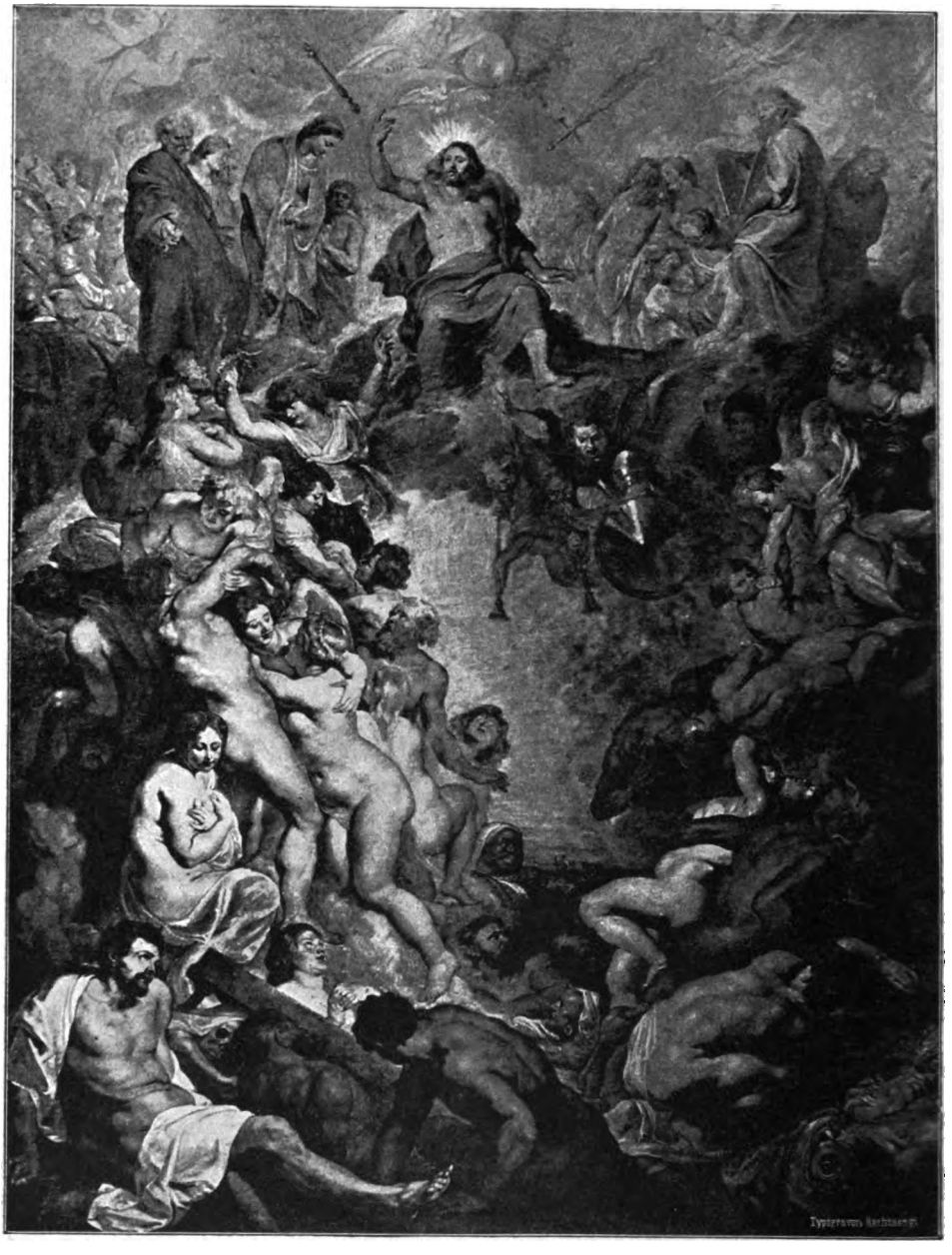

Fig. 43. THE LAST JUDGEMENT. In the Pinakothek at Munich.
After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 56.)

painter. And no one has better represented the excited movements of a restive horse. He positively revelled in portraying the beauty of the fine Andalusian steeds, so much prized at that period for riding and hunting. He occasionally even did not disdain to make studies from clumsy Flemish mares (Fig. 39). With the same masterly hand he also painted dogs, among which

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the fine spotted greyhounds, employed by noblemen for the chase were his special admiration. He was devoted to the painting of wild beasts, many varieties of which he could find at the Zoological Gardens at Antwerp and in private menageries. He often introduces the Bengal tiger with his splendid colouring into his paintings, and lions are not infrequently made principals figures in his compositions. Of which latter animals he has left numerous sketches. We are told that he once invited into his studio a strolling trainer with a magnificent lion, promising the man a handsome sum of money if he would make the beast yawn by tickling its jaw-bones, so that he might study its open mouth. The lion, however, did not approve of this game and, threatening to become dangerous, had to be summarily removed. It is added that, soon after, this same lion tore his keeper to pieces. The finest picture of a lion by Rubens is in the Pinakothek at Munich: painted in 1616 for the Duke of Bavaria. Seven men, three on foot and four on horseback, are represented in the act of attacking a lion and a lioness: one of the men lies dead on the ground, whilst another fights desperately with the lioness, who has thrown him down. A white horse upon which is mounted a Moor also clad in white, severely wounded in its shoulder, rears madly, whilst its rider overpowered by the lion is shouting loudly. Men are cutting and thrusting; horses stamping and rearing; forming a magnificent composition, full of wildest movement (Fig. 40).

Fig. 44. The Adoration of the Shepherds. In the Pinakothek at Munich. After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich.
(To page 56.)

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In 1616 Rubens received from the Prince Palatine of Neuburg a commission to paint *The Last Judgment* for the church at Neuburg. This grand subject had been treated by him already in two separate representations, both of which are now in the Pinakothek at Munich. The stern words of judgment, which divide the Just from the Unjust have already been spoken. In the one picture we may see the Redeemed ascending to heaven like

Fig. 45. Pietà. (Sketch for the altar-piece in the Museum at Antwerp.) In the Albertina at Vienna.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 61.)

a dense cloud of smoke toward the Judge, enthroned on a distant height: in the other the Condemned in an tumultuous body are precipitated into an abyss of glowing flame and darkness. The remarkable features of this work lie perhaps less in the profusion of rising and falling bodies, than in the general effect of the whole, which, on so grand a scale, has never since been attempted. The number of souls is endless; thousands and thousands seem massed together: and in both pictures the impression is conveyed

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Fig. 46. Death of the Consul P. Decius Mus. Sketch for an engraving. In the Liechtenstein Gallery at Vienna. After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York. (To page 66.)

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that they are yet followed by thousands and thousands more (Figs. 41—42). The order executed for the Prince Palatine was necessarily simpler in its conception than the above composition, because the *Ascent to Heaven* and the *Descent to Hell* are united in one composition. The Pinakothek at Munich possesses not only the splendid sketch of the master, (drawn by the painter's own hand), for the smaller *Last Judgment,* but also the sketch for the larger composition, erected in the year 1617 over the altar at Neuburg and subsequently removed to the Collection at Düsseldorf, the capital of the Palatinate; whence in 1805 it was brought to Munich with numerous other paintings by the same master (Fig. 43). The work of pupils is unmistakeable in the larger picture at Munich: and the same is the case with two other altar-pieces executed also for the Prince Palatine some years later: the *Nativity* and the *Descent of the Holy Ghost,* both likewise now in the Pinakothek at Munich; although in the former painting we may trace as his own work the rejoicing angels (Fig. 44).

According to an old tradition Rubens estimated the price of his works according to the time spent over them. He reckoned about 100 florins a day for his labour which, making allowance for the difference in the value of money at the present time, would be about £ 19. This seems very probable since he was wont to execute pictures of large dimensions in a comparatively short time: and it is moreover confirmed by a letter preserved at the Plantin-Moretus Museum at Antwerp, wherein Balthasar Moretus states that Rubens makes designs for titlepages only in his leisure moments: so that if a drawing for such purpose was required of him on a workingday his price for it was 100 florins. The paintings executed with the help of pupils were comparatively cheaper. This we learn from Rubens himself in his interesting correspondence with Sir Dudley Carleton, British Ambassador at the Hague. These letters dating from the year 1618, a great number of which have been published, are invaluable for the comprehension of his character and his inner life. Through them we are enabled to admire his extensive knowledge, his clearness of sight and the accuracy of his judgment. The subject of this correspondence was the collection of antique marbles owned by Carleton. Without having even seen them Rubens desired to acquire them, because, as he himself said, he was "mad on antiques". Sir Dudley Carleton proposed to exchange his marbles for paintings by the master himself. This proposition the latter accepted most willingly and having received a catalogue of Carleton's antiques with a statement of the prices paid for them, he forwarded a list of his own paintings, detailing their size, value and the amount of cooperation upon each received by him from friends and pupils. There was a *Chained Prometheus,* 8 feet by 9, — the eagle in which was painted by Snyders, — for 500 florins; a *Daniel in the Lion's Den,* painted from life — an original executed by him alone — 8 feet by 12, for 600 florins; *Leopards* (painted from life) *with Satyrs and Nymphs,* — also an original by himself, — except the beautiful landscape, which was executed "by a master much skilled in that line",

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9 feet by 11, for 600 florins. Other pictures are enumerated with the same accuracy: a *Leda with the Swan, attended by a Cupid;* a life-size Christ on the Cross, of which the artist says, that it was "perhaps the best picture he had ever painted"; a smaller replica of the Palatine *Last Judgment,*—

Fig. 47. The Destruction of the Hosts of Sennacherib. In the Pinakothek at Munich. After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 68.)

the work of a pupil which, however, might pose as an original if the master were to touch it up —; a *St. Peter with other fishermen taking the Tribute-money from the Fish's mouth,* painted from life; a replica of the *Lion Hunt,* painted for the Duke of Bavaria, — begun by a pupil, but repainted entirely by the master, — and another copy, — treated in the same way — of the *Christ and His Apostles,* owned by the Duke of Lerma; an

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Achilles disguised as a Woman, an impressive picture with many beautiful young female figures; a *St. Sebastian* and a *Susanna.*

Carleton then wrote to Rubens that he had selected six pictures. And further invited the painter to visit him at the Hague, to inspect his antique marbles, which formed a collection such as no prince nor private individual possessed on this side of the Alps. "But", he continued, "for people in my position who are always on the move, objects of so much weight are not convenient, and moreover — to be frank — we all have human weaknesses — we sometimes change our tastes —, and so my fancy has suddenly taken another turn and has gone over from the sculptors to the painters:

Fig. 48. The Angel of the Lord smites the Hosts of Sennacherib.
Pen and ink drawing in the Albertina at Vienna.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York. (To page 68.)

especially to Mr. Rubens." Owing to the construction of his Dutch as well as of his English residences, Carleton after all could only take Rubens' smaller pictures, and there therefore remained after the valuation a cash-difference between the parties. It was however mutually arranged that Rubens should pay in addition 4000 florins for the antique works and 2000 florins worth of Brussel tapestry. Carleton was particularly anxious that the artist himself should chose the latter, wich were to be adorned with representations of figures, for him. Rubens mentions in the letter, in which he consents to this proposition that he had that year spent several thousand florins on his house and that consequently would have much preferred to pay entirely with pictures; "since everyone is more liberal with the fruit of his

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garden, than with the fruit which he has to buy in the market". In the same connection he uses the words: "I am not a prince; but a man, who lives by the labour of his own hands." In his answer, the polite courtier referred to the above sentence in the following words: "I cannot agree with your statement, that you are *not* a prince; for I consider you to be the

Fig. 49. The Conversion of St. Paul. In the Pinakothek at Munich.
After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 68.)

prince of artists, and of people of noble sentiment. And in this sense I kiss your hand." To a man like Rubens this was surely not mere flattery.

Another circumstance worth mentioning, since it is so characteristic of the artist, we also learn from this correspondence with Sir Dudley Carleton; namely that Rubens was most anxious to satisfy the buyer by giving him the choice of a great variety of subjects. Eventually they both

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seem to have been exceedingly pleased with the transaction. Carleton was delighted with the pictures he acquired and Rubens was more than happy with the antique marbles he received in exchange.

Fig. 50. The Battle of the Amazons. In the Pinakothek at Munich.
After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl. Munich. (To page 70.)

We may see from the above list, that Rubens giving rein to his creative powers, not only accomplished works at his own pleasure on the most varied subjects, but was at the same time also continually occupied with the delineation of sacred subjects. Moreover he allowed his pupils to copy his earlier works, since he was sure that to find numerous purchasers for them.

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The famous picture in the Antwerp Museum known under the name of *Le Christ sur la Paille,* which has the special merit of being painted entirely by himself, is one of the religious pictures executed by him at that time. The centre-piece represents a so-called *Pietà.* The Dead Body of Christ supported by Joseph of Aremathea reposes on a bench covered with straw (hence the name). Mary Magdalen folding her hands gazes in deep emotion at the Saviour, whilst the Holy Mother raising the pall, with which she is

Fig. 51. Head of a Child. (Nicholas Rubens as a child.) Drawing in the Albertina at Vienna. After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 70.)

about to cover her beloved Son, her beautiful face expressing the deepest grief looks up to heaven. On one of the wings is represented the *Virgin and Child;* on the other *St. John,* his eyes raised heavenwards in deep devotion. A fine drawing for the centre-portion is in the Albertina at Vienna (Fig. 45). Another painting belonging to this period or perhaps even somewhat earlier, is the *Assumption of the Virgin,* originally painted for the church of the Barefooted Friars (Carmelites), but now in the Museum at Brussels, a work also completed entirely by himself.

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During the year 1617 was painted the picture in St. Pauls' Church at Antwerp, formerly in the Church of the Dominicans: the *Flagellation of Christ;* renowned for its treatment of the nude. Two important works

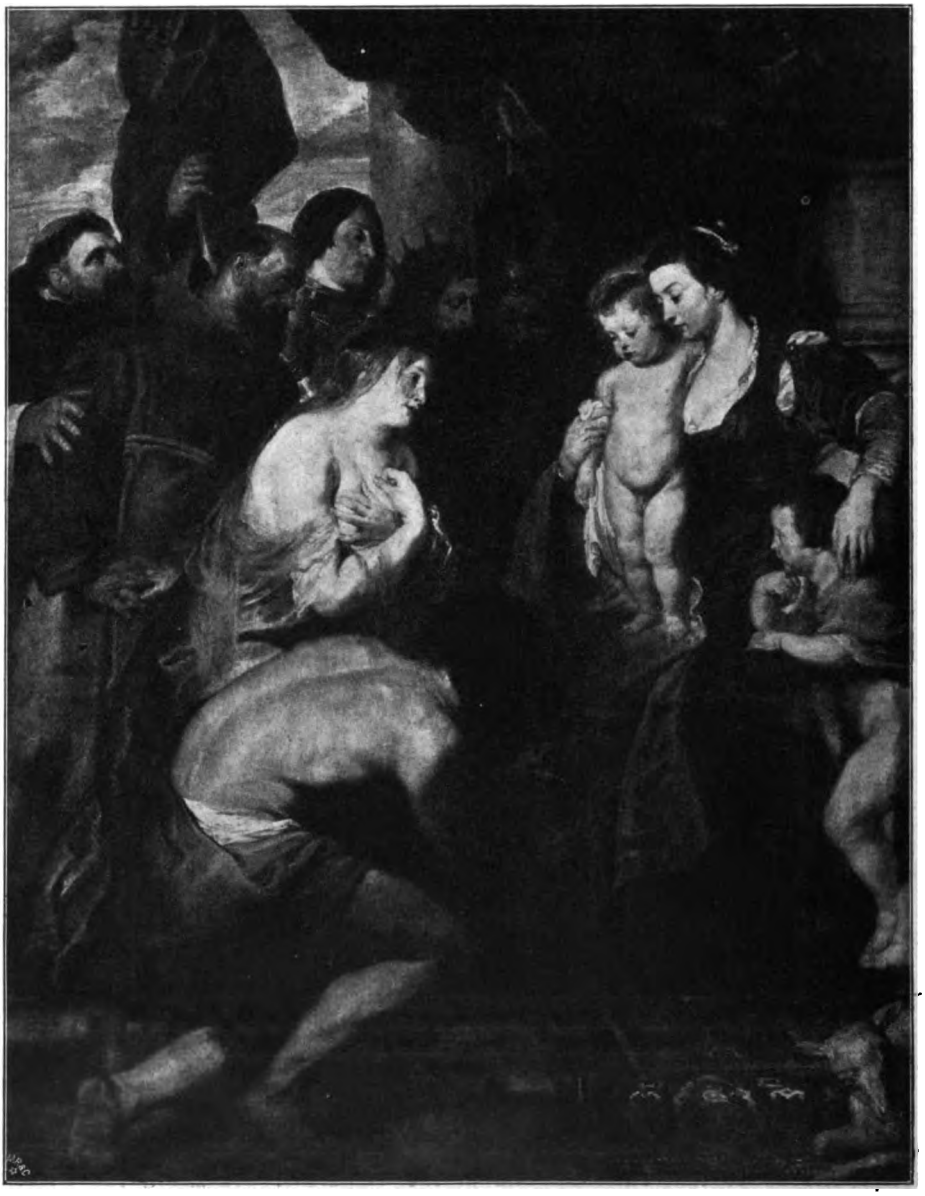

Fig. 52. "Mary, Refuge of Sinners." In the Gallery at Cassel.
After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 70.)

were also executed for churches at Malines. For the church of St. John in that city, he was commissioned towards the end of 1616 to paint an Altar-piece representing the *Adoration of the Magi.* It was a composition

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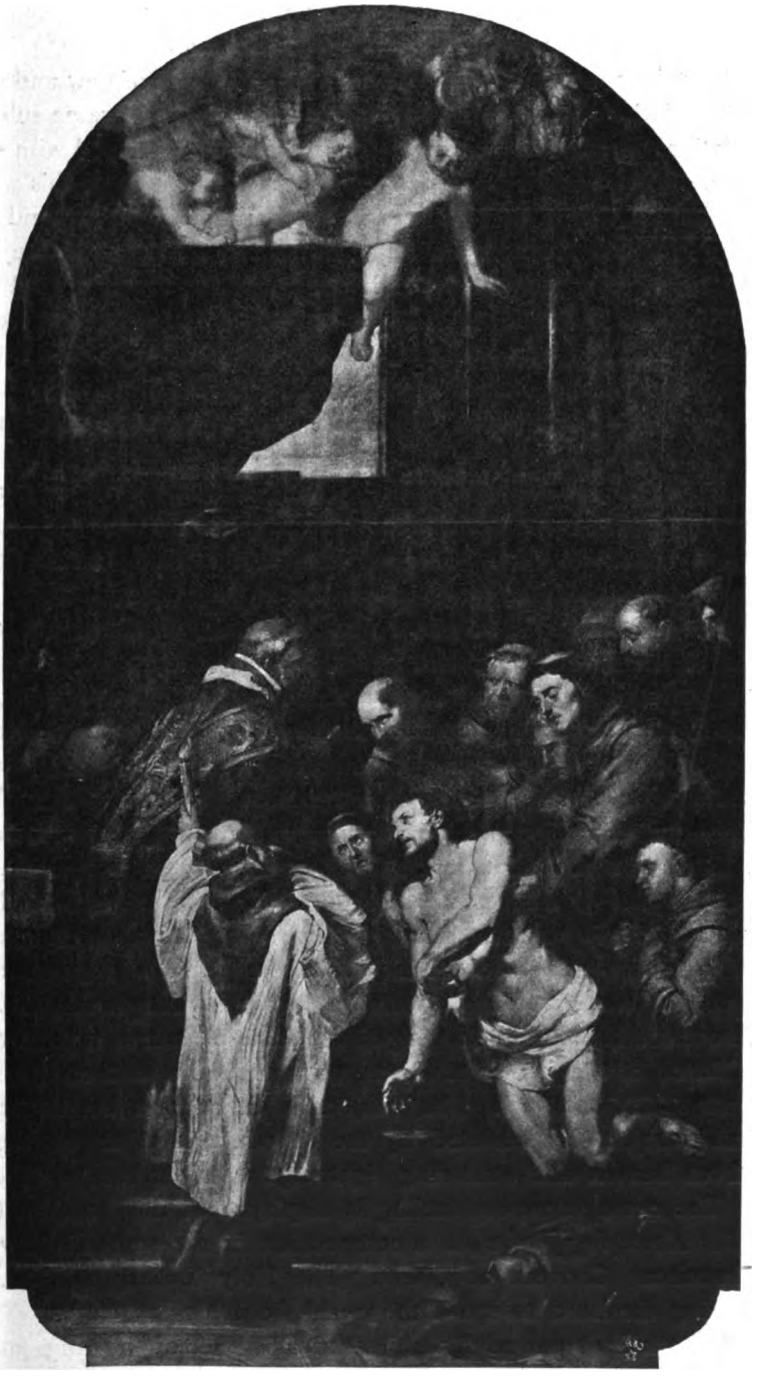

Fig. 53. The Communion of St. Francis. In the Museum at Antwerp. (To page 70.)

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which he had treated once before with great success, on a larger scale, and which he also subsequently repeated. He found therein an opportunity for rich display and picturesque profusion: representing the Oriental Kings with great splendour, attended by a most brilliant suite. In the execution of this subject he succeeded in producing a great variety of new and powerful effects. Of all the compositions however dealing with this same subject, the one at Malines is perhaps the most fascinating and executed with the most loving care. We are told that Rubens himself always spoke of this work with great satisfaction. The picture gives us an impression of joy and festivity due to the beautiful harmony of its colour. The key-note is the King in the centre, clad in a magnificent red mantle, which forms a contrast with the blue garment of the Virgin. Light radiates from the Infant as it were illuminating the Kings, the oldest of whom is on his knees, whilst the second one, in the red mantle, stands behind him, and the third, a negro, gazes around with looks of curiosity. His train is born by two rather impudent-looking pages, who are closely followed by a crowd of people, all anxious to catch a glimpse of the Holy Babe. On the wings of this altar-piece, which is still *in situ,* are scenes from the lives of the two SS. John: the Baptist and the Evangelist. Cardinal Richelieu offered 10,000 florins for these works alone, but the parishionors firmly declined his offer.

Another painting, of a different type, but not less admirable is the one belonging to the Liebfrauenkirche at Malines. It was executed in 1618 in the brief period of only 10 days for the so-called "Brotherhood of the Fishermen", and represents the *Miraculous Draught of Fishes.* Here is no display of splendour, but merely some sturdy fishermen, toiling over their work, under a lowering sky such as spreads over the North-Sea. This is a most impressively realistic piece of work, and we can quite understand why Rubens, in the list made for Sir Dudley Carleton, stated of a similar picture of fishermen, that it was "painted from life". The subject of this latter painting, the *Finding of the Tribute Money,* appears also on one of the wings of the altar-piece at Malines; while the *pendant* represents *Tobias dragging a Fish out of the Sea, at the bidding of the Angel Raphael.* Again of a different kind, though belonging to the same period, is a picture painted for the Church of the Jesuits at Ghent, now in the Museum at Brussels: the *Martyrdom of St. Lavinus.* The subject is certainly a horrible one, but the painful subject is alleviated by the introduction of angels descending swiftly from heaven and scattering lightnings amongst the terrified executioners. The same strenuous feeling is displayed in the wrathful figure of *Christ, the Avenging Judge,* in a composition in the same Gallery painted for a Franciscan Convent at Ghent. The Holy Mother and St. Francis are imploring the Lord to spare the world from his vengeance. The force of Divine Wrath is as powerfully expressed as is the supplicating earnestness of the Holy Intercessors.

Whilst Rubens was in negociation with the English Ambassador at the Hague for the exchange of the antique marbles he, in reference to Carleton's

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proposal to make up the difference in value with Brussels tapestry,— mentioned the fact, that under the directions of certain noblemen, he himself had made some sketches for tapestry, then being executed in Brussels. A fortnight later, he again refers to these sketches, and we learn then that they dealt with the

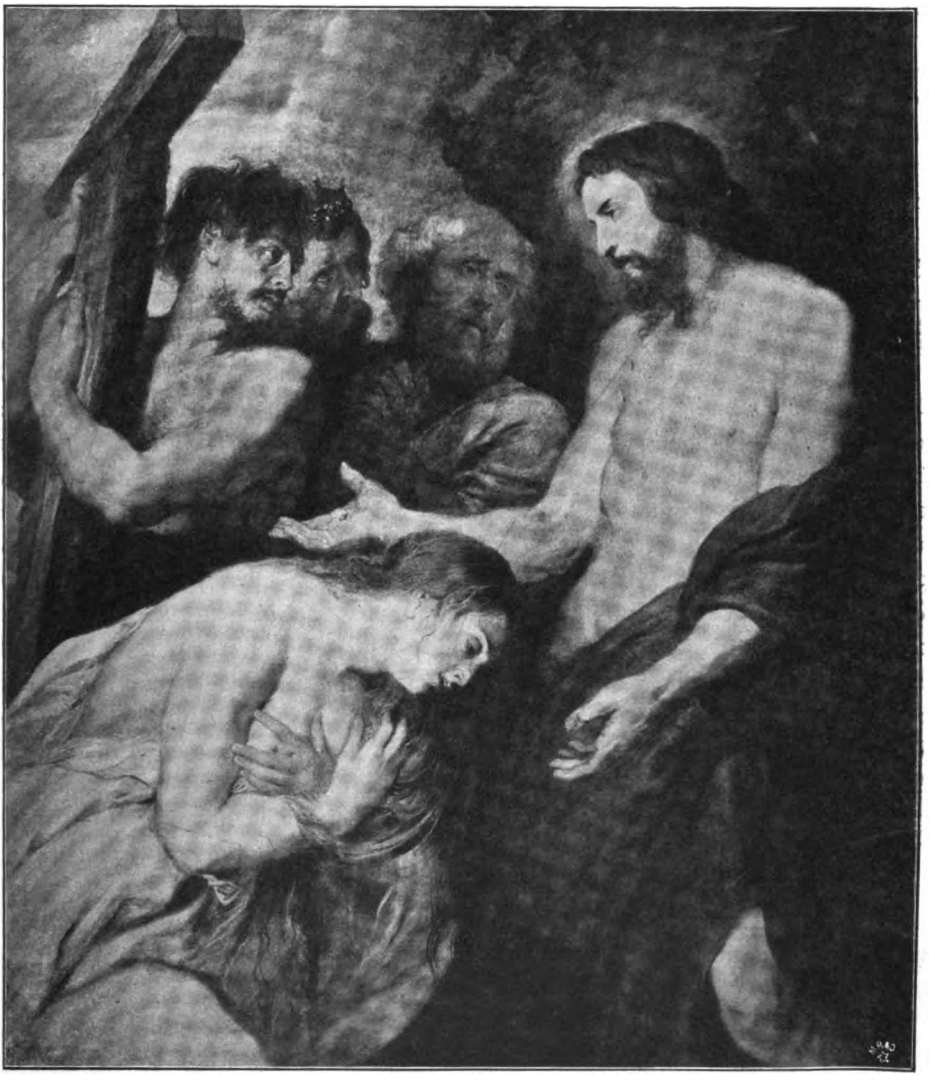

Fig. 54. CHRIST AND THE FOUR PENITENTS. In the Pinakothek at Munich.
After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 71.)

Story of Publius Decius Mus: the Roman Consul, who sacrified himself for the preservation of the State. These designs for tapestries, supplied to the looms at the beginning of May 1618, still exist, and are now in the Collection of Prince Liechtenstein at Vienna. Rubens calls them indifferently, designs or cartoons: — descriptions which are so far incorrect, since they are really

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magnificently executed paintings in oil. He purposely facilitated the work of the weaver by designing the compositions *reversed,* in so much that figures carry their weapons in their left hands and their shields in their right. For the weaver standing behind the frame over which he lays his threads, is at the back of the tapestry: and thus cannot see how the work under his hands progresses, without looking into a mirror placed for that purpose opposite to him. If therefore the design from which he works is drawn or painted in the ordinary way, the weaver must himself reverse it, making the left hand right and *vice versa.* The engraver working in a similar way, for the purposes of his design usually places his model behind him, thus copying it, not directly, but from its reflection in a mirror in front of him. Any one who has made drawings or paintings from a mirror knows how very trying to the eyes is this species of work, so that when Rubens in making these designs reversed the composition it was evidently with the intention of lightening the weavers' labour.

The master divided the subjects, taken from Livy, into six powerful episodes, each filled with numerous life-size figures. In the first of these Decius Mus, standing on an elevated plat-form, relates his Dream to his soldiers: in which he had been shown that the Victory would be given to that army whose leader should perish. In the second painting the Soothsayers devoutly consult the omens in the sacrifice, recognizing therein the evil prospects of the Romans: which determines Decius Mus to devote himself to the Will of Heaven. The third, perhaps the most powerful and impressive of the series, depicts the solemn consecration of the hero, which takes place beneath the shade of some splendid beeches. In the fourth act of the Drama, Decius discarding his shield mounts his charger. With a look of pious determination, majestically raising his hand, he takes leave of his Lictors, and bids them return to his colleague, since he, dead from henceforth, no longer needs them. The rays of a beautiful sunset suggest the idea that, like the hero's life, the summer day is drawing to a close. The fifth composition shows the catastrophe: Decius pierced by the Latins falls from his horse upon a heap of wounded warriors. In his up-turned gaze, we see readiness to die for his country, since the gods have so willed it. At the same moment the furious onslaught of the Romans is crowned with success, and the Latins are put to flight (Fig. 46). Thus ends the grand tragedy which Rubens executed so effectively, and with such grandeur of style. The sixth and final tableau of the series is merely a brilliant display of trophies, prisoners and heaps of spoil &c.: whilst extended in the foreground, on a bier bedecked with purple and wreaths of bag, lies the dead leader.

In spite of his inexhaustible powers of invention the painter did not disdain to repeat himself: and sometimes made use of earlier compositions, introducing variations appropriate to the subject he was describing. But it is remarkable that he invariably succeeded, in making as uniform a creation of the new work, as if the borrowed portion in it were new

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Fig. 55. Erechthonius and the Daughters of Cecrops. In the Liechtenstein Gallery at Vienna.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York. (To page 72.)

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and original. There certainly can be nothing more finished, nor more complete in itself, than the above-mentioned representation of the heroic Death of the Consul P. Decius Mus. Yet this composition is really taken from another picture of much smaller dimensions now in the Munich Pinakothek which treats of an altogether different subject: *i. e.* the *Defeat of Sennacherib.* The angels of the Lord breaking through the dark clouds and bringing death and consternation upon the cavalry of the King of Assyria, are painted with unusual force (Fig. 47). A divine punishment, and a hero's expiatory self-sacrifice are both most strikingly treated with incomparable skill, although the second composition is founded on the same conception as the earlier work.

A slight but very fine pen and ink drawing in the Albertina (Fig. 48) shows another adaptation of this favourite subject: the *Destruction of the Hosts of Assyrian:* whilst the Munich Pinakothek possesses a companion picture to the *Defeat of Sennacherib,* representing the *Conversion of St. Paul,* executed probably about the same time; *i. e.* shortly before 1618. Here also a sudden catastrophe, against which no resistance seems to be possible is depicted with the utmost vigour. A sudden flash of light depriving the men of their senses strikes terror into the horses. Saul, as if thunderstruck, to the dismay of the companions, still able to observe him, has fallen to the earth (Fig. 49). In the same Gallery is to be found also the sketch for this picture, which shows how clearly the master had planned out his first conception. It would seem that the representation of a tumultuous crowd of men and horses had at that period great attractions for Rubens. His most celebrated work of this nature, also in the Pinakothek, is the *Battle of the Amazons;* the exact date of the execution of which work can be fixed by the circumstance that Rubens in 1622 wrote to a friend, that Lucas Vostermann had in hand for three years an engraving of this picture. This painting of comparatively smaller dimensions is, like the two aboved-named compositions, also executed with the greatest care. In a way it recalls Leonardo da Vinci's *Battle of Anghiari,* of which Rubens had made a drawing, when in Milan, and at the same time also Raphael's *Battle of Constantine* in the Vatican. Nevertheless the work in its entirety breathes the independent genius of Rubens. On a narrow bridge several warrior maidens are making a last effort to resist the furious onset of Theseus' cavalry. A frantic struggle is taking place in which even the horses seem to participate. But the Amazon's defeat is clearly imminent. In vain the standard-bearer seeks to recover her banner, which a youthful Greek is wrenching from her. Grasping it with ebbing strength, she is flung off her rearing horse. Other Amazons together with their horses are precipitated into the river. The water dashes up with the force of their fall whilst their horses galop off riderless. Nearer the bridge, some, still mounted, in wild despair ride over the bodies of their dead companions into the water; whence others have already tried to gain safety by swimming. In the distance

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Fig. 56. The Toilet of Venus. In the Liechtenstein Gallery at Vienna.
After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 72.)

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a conflagration is visible, the glowing red of which tints the horizon (Fig. 50). In 1519 Rubens was commissioned by Caspar Charles to paint *St. Francis of Assisi receiving Extreme Unction* as a large altar-piece for the Church of the Minorites at Antwerp. It was no easy task for a painter of voluptuous splendour; who loved to portray Saints of youthful beauty clad in brillant silks; to have to represent an ascetic monk: but the artist, who could, if he pleased, do anything, well understood how to make the most even of this commission. In general conception he adhered to a well-known example of a similar subject, namely, Domenichino's *Communion of St. Jerome* in the Vatican. In this instance this Prince of colour abjured his natural taste, and avoiding all colour composed the entire picture in a sombre brown tone. Delighting as he did in loveliness of form, he chose here to lay the utmost stress upon the expression of soul: and it is from that stand-point that we must examine this picture. From that point of view also the kneeling Saint, nude, and no longer able to control his wasted limbs, who supported by two fellow monks and living only to receive the Last Offices, becomes one of the *chefs d'œuvre,*—worthy of the fame which has always surrounded it,—of the Museum at Antwerp (Fig. 53).

Among the numerous pictures representing the *Virgin Mary with the Infant Christ* alone, or surrounded by Saints, there is a specially attractive one, which must have been painted in 1619. In its execution we can recognise the collaboration of Rubens' greatest pupil, Anthony van Dyck, who is known to have worked in the master's studio from 1618 to 1620, and who had even already begun to be a worthy rival. This painting is in the Picture Gallery at Cassel; whilst a slightly varied replica is in the Hermitage Collection. It represents the *Mother of God enthroned as a Refuge for Sinners.* On her lap stands Jesus, whom she supports with her right arm, whilst her left rests on the little St. John. Before her kneels the Prodigal Son; beside whom Mary Magdalene gazes up at the Infant Christ with pious fervour, her beautiful hands crosssed on her bosom; and near her is King David, no less remarkable for his expressive countenance. From behind these biblical personages, the representative Saints of the Penitential Orders,—SS. Dominic and Francis,—approach the throne. Beside King David stands Augustine, the Holy Bishop: and further back St. George with his banner (Fig. 52). In the dark-haired Mary Magdalene we may perhaps recognize a remote, and perhaps scarcely intended, likeness to Isabella Brant; but there is no doubt that the Infant Jesus is a genuine portrait of Rubens' second son, who saw the light in March 1618. This boy, who received the name of Nicholas from his god-father the Marquess Pallavicini of Genoa, seems to have been the special favourite of his father; and a charming sketch of a child's head, representing him at two years of age, is in the Museum at Berlin. Not less attractive is another drawing of him, at a still more tender age, in the Albertina, evidently a study for the Cassel picture (Fig. 51). Somewhat akin to this work, as far as details are concerned, and no doubt painted about the same time, is the fine picture with half-length figures in the

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Pinakothek at Munich: *"The Saviour and the Four Penitents"*. The expression of the head of Christ, the Personification of Benevolence and Mercy, as well as those of Mary Magdalene, the Penitent Thief, St. Peter, and King David, are wonderful in the realism of their expression (Fig. 54).

Fig. 57. The Four Continents. In the Imperial Gallery at Vienna. After a photograph from the original by J. Löwy, Vienna.
(To page 72.)

The peculiarly attractive, and graciously modelled figure of a woman, with hair and complexion shining, as it were, in their own brilliance, so frequently painted by Rubens as *Mary Magdalene,* appears in an altogether different *rôle,* — as the Personification of the *Goddess of Love,* — in a very carefully executed picture in the Liechtenstein-Gallery. Here her exquisite

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figure, in the full bloom of health and vigour, is shown from behind. An attendant negress raising her abundant hair, discloses shoulders of the whiteness of finest marble, whilst we may observe her fair face in a mirror held by a Cupid in front of her (Fig. 56). We find her again in a very similar attitude, though in a much larger mythological composition, among the *Daughters of Cecrops discovering the child Erechthonios.* Here she is one of the two maidens, who, in defiance of the command of Pallas Athene, are prying into the basket containing the boy and the serpent. The third sister, who did not break the goddess' injunction, stands aloof under a tree, and is one of the most attractive maidens that Rubens ever painted (Fig. 55). Her figure, undraped, with head and shoulders enveloped in a clear shadow, decidedly recalls the goddess in that large and much-disputed picture of *Neptune and Amphitrite* (or *Neptune and Libye*) in the Berlin Museum. In this painting also, which is, however, far inferior to the *Daughters of Cecrops,* we may notice again the fair features of the Magdalen, though this time representing a nymph hiding in the water: the most attractive figure in this huge canvas. This picture, the genuineness of which was some years ago questioned by some with the same vehemence that it was affirmed by others, recalls in several points the magnificent painting at the Museum of Art-History in Vienna personifying the *Four Continents and their Four Chief Rivers.* To each of the four Rivergods is attached a nymph as a companion. In the foreground Father Nile his attendant nymph a negress has in accordance with ancient tradition fortis symbol a crocodile surrounded by putti. Opposite him the Ganges is attended by a nymph and a Bengal tigress, who is fiercely spitting at the crocodile. The two other Rivergods, the Danube and the Maramon, — the latter half hidden in reeds and shadows, because at that period so little known, — appear more youthful than their companions of the older worlds (Fig. 57).

In 1620 again was executed another important altar-piece: namely, the picture now in the Antwerp-Museum, representing *Christ crucified between the two Thieves.* It is eventide, and the Son of God has finished his agony. The Roman centurion, to satisfy himself of his death, pierce his side with a spear, whilst a soldier prepares to break with an iron rod the legs of the two others crucified with him. Overcome with grief the Mother of Christ, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and St. John shrink away from the mournful scene; whilst Mary Magdalen, clinging to the cross and resting her head and body against it, holds up her white arms to ward off the Roman with his cruel weapon (Fig. 58). In this picture, known by the name of *Coup de lance,* it is remarkable how all rules of perspective are ignored, and how little the natural dimensions of the respective figures to each other are observed: but it would show a want of artistic taste to find fault for this reason with an otherwise so admirably executed a painting. Rubens was commissioned to paint it for the Church of St. Francis, by the major Nicolas Rockox with whom he was on terms of intimate friendship.

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An excellent portrait of this gentleman with his wife has come down to us on the wings of another altar-piece, also ordered from Rubens, re-

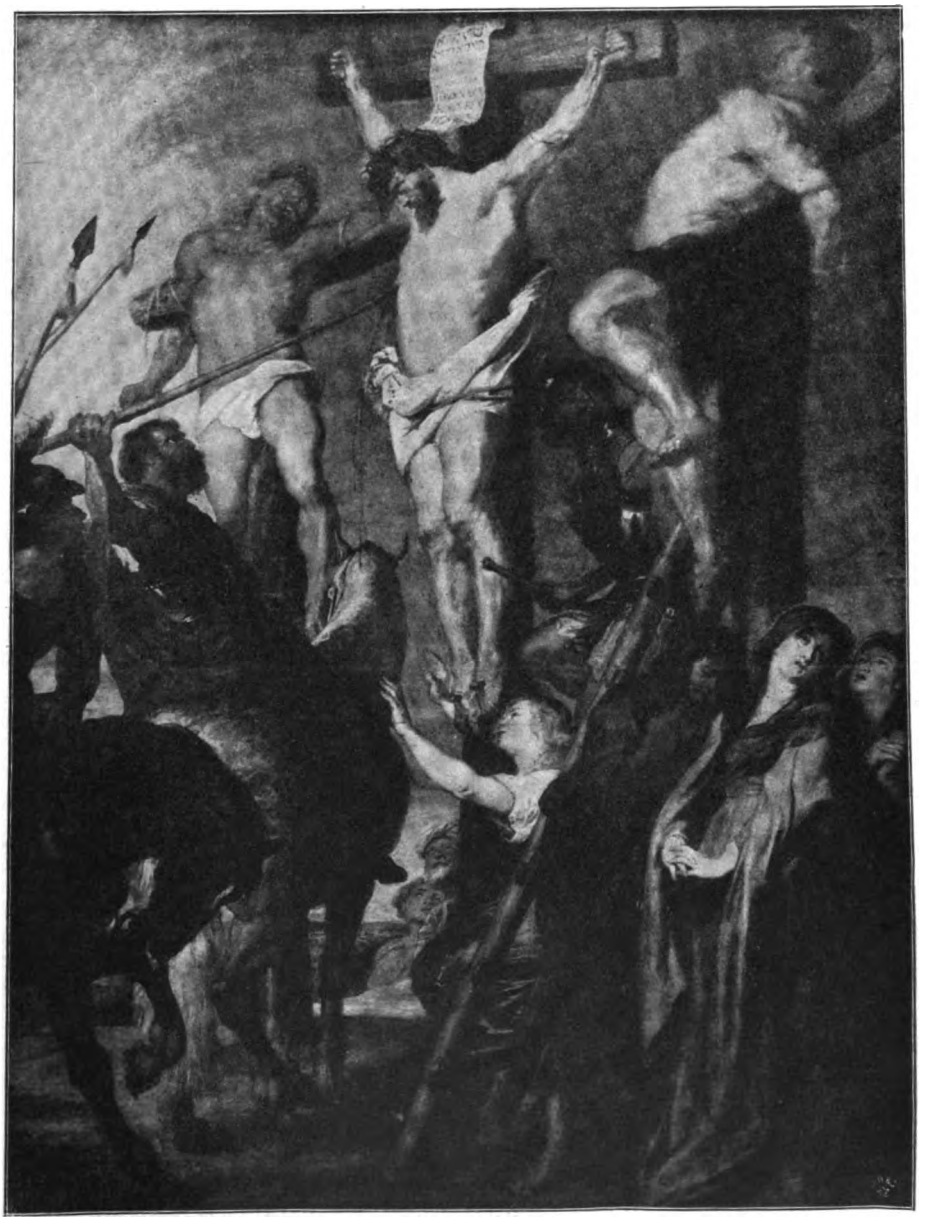

Fig. 58. CHRIST ON THE CROSS. In the Museum at Antwerp. (To page 72.)

presenting the *Conversion of St. Thomas:* now preserved in the Antwerp Museum. The powerful impression conveyed by the *Crucifixion* above-mentioned lies chiefly in the majestic repose of death, which raises the Crucified Christ far above all the griefs and the passions of this world.

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The artist again depicted the *Death of the Saviour,* a painting now in the Louvre, with only the Virgin, St. John and the Magdalen, grouped at the foot of the cross, forming a mournful silhouette on a lonely hill:

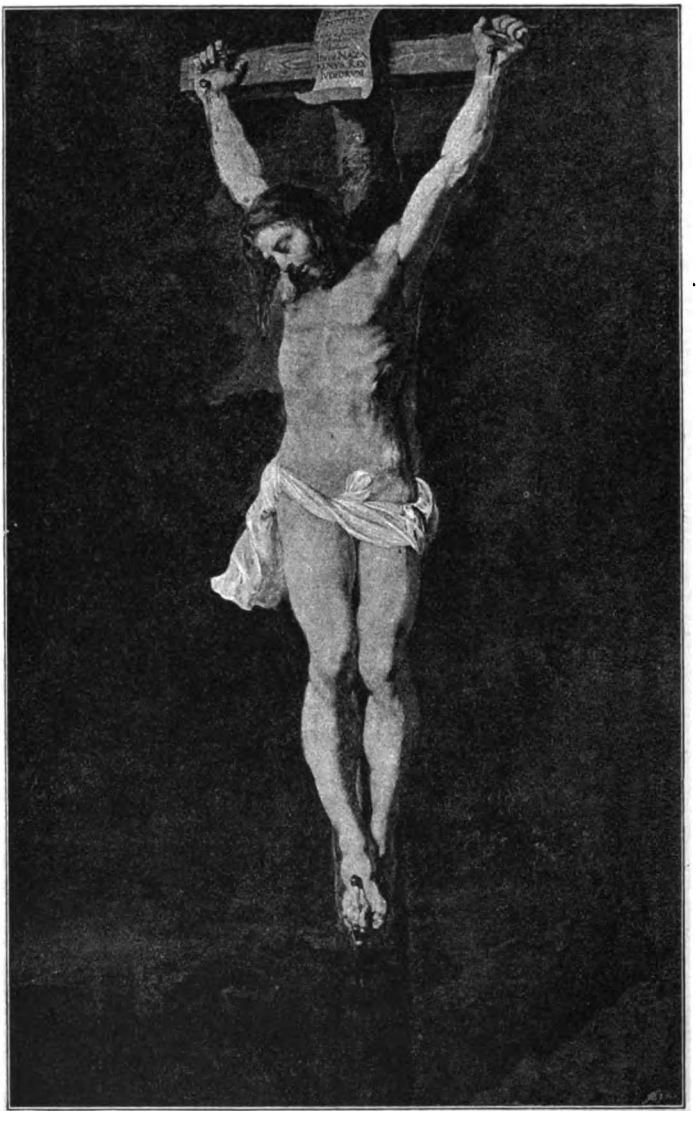

Fig. 59. "It is finished." In the Pinakothek at Munich.
After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 74.)

whilst still another, and perhaps the most impressive of all, is the *Crucifixion* in the Antwerp Museum; in which Christ hangs high on the Cross, alone and forsaken, with only silent nature around him. The vividly white body of the dead Saviour shines as the only light through the prevailing darkness. This splendid work has been copied and reproduced a

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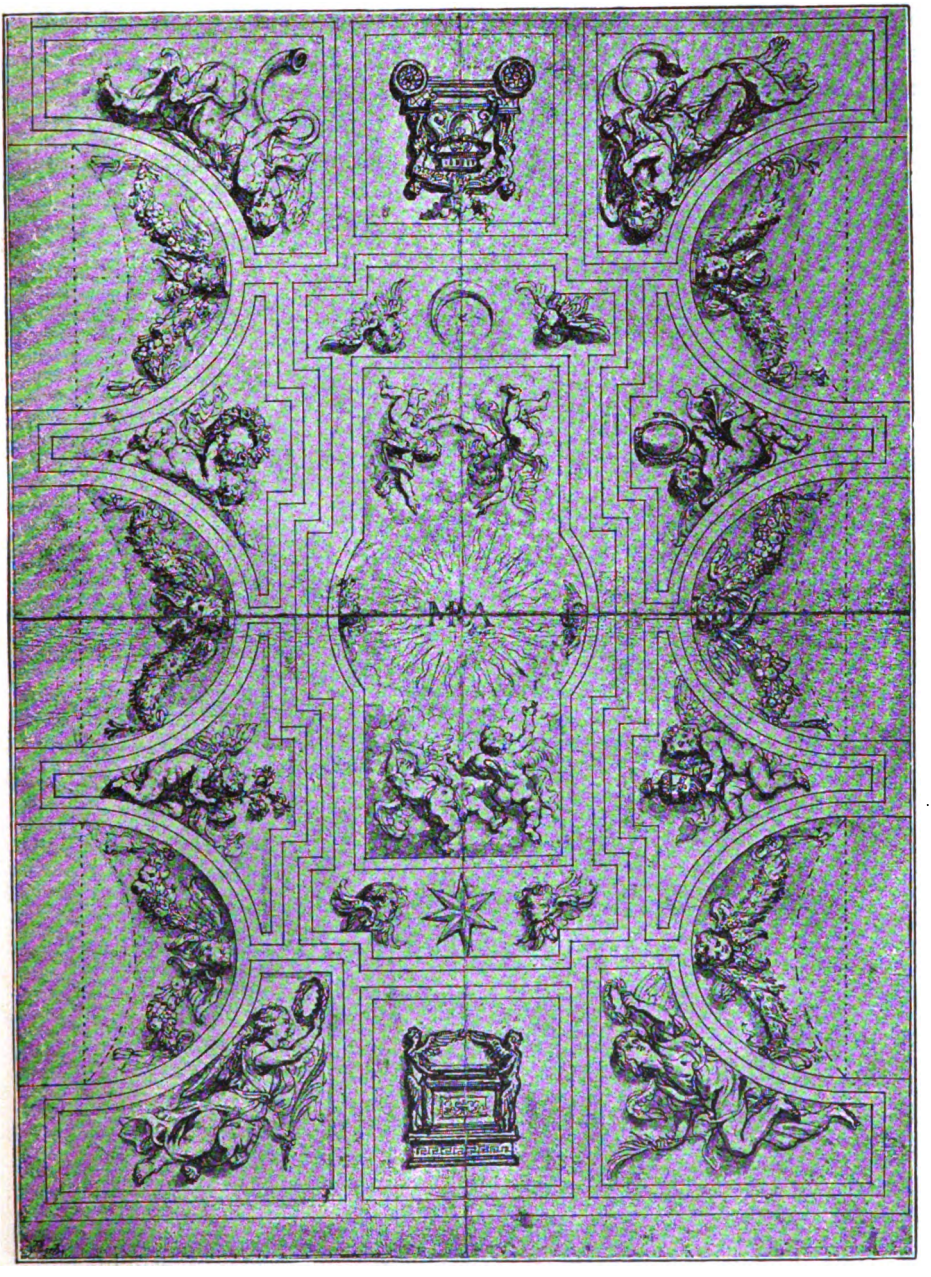

Fig. 60. Sketch for the decoration of the centre vault of the Jesuit Church at Antwerp.
Drawing in the Albertina at Vienna.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 78.)

vast number of times, and the Munich Pinakothek possesses a replica, though in a much smaller size (Fig. 59).

The completion of the Church of the Jesuits at Antwerp in the year 1620 brought Rubens very extensive commissions. On the 20th March in

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that year he signed a contract with Father Jacobus Tirinus, the head of the Jesuit College at Antwerp, to the effect that he would undertake the entire pictorial decoration of the church. He had already been entrusted with altar-pieces for it: but it was now chiefly the painting of the ceiling, which had to be considered. For this purpose Rubens was directed to make

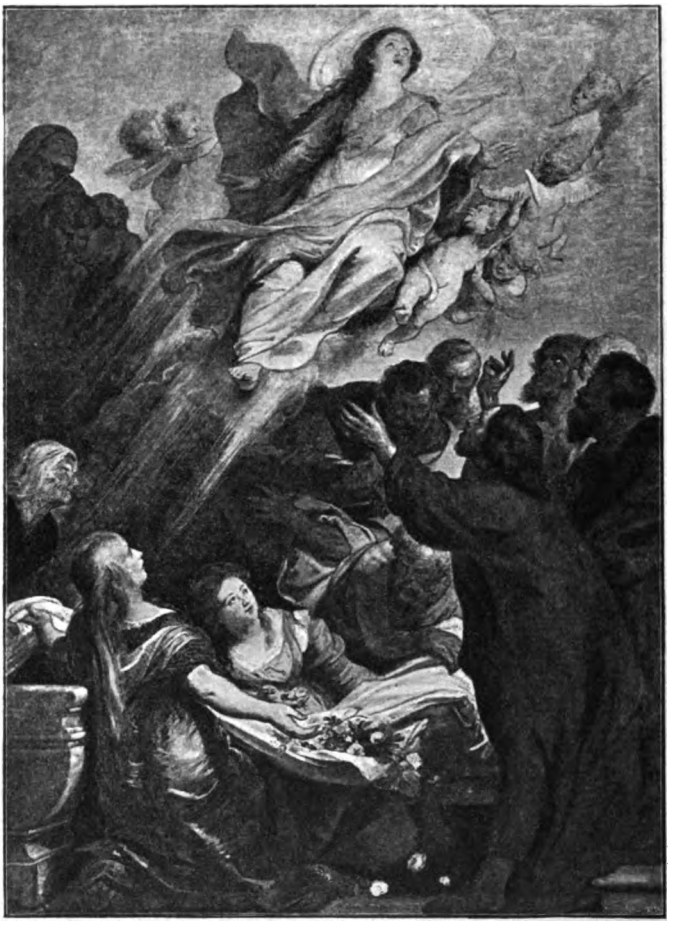

Fig. 61. The Assumption of the Virgin. In the Pinakothek at Munich.
After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 79.)

39 designs, to be executed by Van Dyck and some of his other pupils, and subsequently to be finally completed by the master himself.

Only in a very few instances has it been permitted to an artist to decorate pictorially architectural buildings designed by himself, and thus to arrive at a combination of the highest perfection. If there be such a thing as a Jesuit style in painting, Rubens certainly was its greatest master; for he thoroughly understood how to represent splendour and magnificence, though at the same time his genius never allowed itself to be lost in confused exaggeration. Several sketches, imperfect though they be, still give us an

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Fig. 62. St. Ignatius Loyola healing the Possessed. In the Imperial Gallery at Vienna. After a photograph from the original by J. Löwy, Berlin. (To page 78.)

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idea of the grandeur of the interior of this Jesuit church, the gilded marble decoration of which formed so exquisite a frame for Rubens' paintings, resplendent in glowing colour.

The Imperial Picture-Gallery at Vienna possesses two of these sketches; one by Sebastian Vrancx, who, like Rubens before him, was a pupil of Adam van Noort; the other, executed in 1665, by Anton Geringh. Another representation of the interior of this church by the same clever architectural painter is in the Munich Pinakothek. Unhappily the church was struck by lightning in 1718 and totally destroyed in the resulting conflagration. The building itself was however reconstructed on a much simpler scale, but the ceiling frescoes were totally lost. In the Plantin-Moretus Museum there are drawings by Jacob de Wit, and reproductions from the 36 paintings which adorned the ceilings of the aisles and of the galleries over them: but of the three paintings which were in the vestibule only one has come down to us in an engraving. The gilded vault of the nave was divided by ornaments in stucco into variously shaped spaces, occupied by single figures. In the centre, child-angels hovered around a radiant wreath encircling the name of *Mary*. A preliminary sketch for the decoration of this centre vault has been preserved and is now, like most of Rubens' drawings, in the Albertina at Vienna (Fig. 60). Fortunately it was possible to save from destruction the three great altar-pieces which were almost entirely the work of the master's own hand. They were bought by the Empress Maria Theresa and are now in the Imperial Museum at Vienna. The two principal ones of vast size represent scenes from the later Lives of the Saints with numerous life-size figures. In one of these the Founder of the Jesuit Order, St. Ignatius Loyola, in his priestly vestments stands beside an altar; whilst near him are assembled a number of monks belonging to the Society of Jesus attired in black robes. Above, in a cloud of light, hover a number of child-angels, whilst by his prayers the Saint is heals several demoniacs, brought to the steps of the altar (Fig. 62). The other picture represents Loyola's colleague, St. Francis Xavier, another Founder of the Order, preaching Christ in India, and resuscitating in His Name the dead in the presence of an astonished multitude. High above among the clouds we may perceive the emblems of the Catholic Faith, whilst angels bear before them the Saviour's Cross, from which shaffs of light cast down an idol in the vestibule of its temple. Out of these subjects, which to another would perhaps have been quite devoid of artistic suggestion, Rubens by his powerful imagination, has created great master-pieces, which, from their general conception and expressive power, from their colouring and effect of light and shadow, might even be reckoned amongst his very finest productions. St. Francis Xavier was canonized in the year 1619 and St. Ignatius Loyola in 1622; from which facts we may conclude that the artist painted the picture of the former Saint for the high altar of this church immediately after his Canonization and that that of St. Ignatius, which is to be seen above the high altar in the above-mentioned drawings, replaced it only three years later. The third picture

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saved from this church now also in the Imperial Museum at Vienna, represents the *Assumption of the Virgin,* and was painted for a side altar. The Virgin, surrounded by angels and enfolded in a cloud of light, full of joyous expectation is ascending into heaven, whilst the assembled apostles and holy women gaze into the empty sepulchre and look upward with profound devotion. Rubens himself declared this *Assumption* to be the best that he had

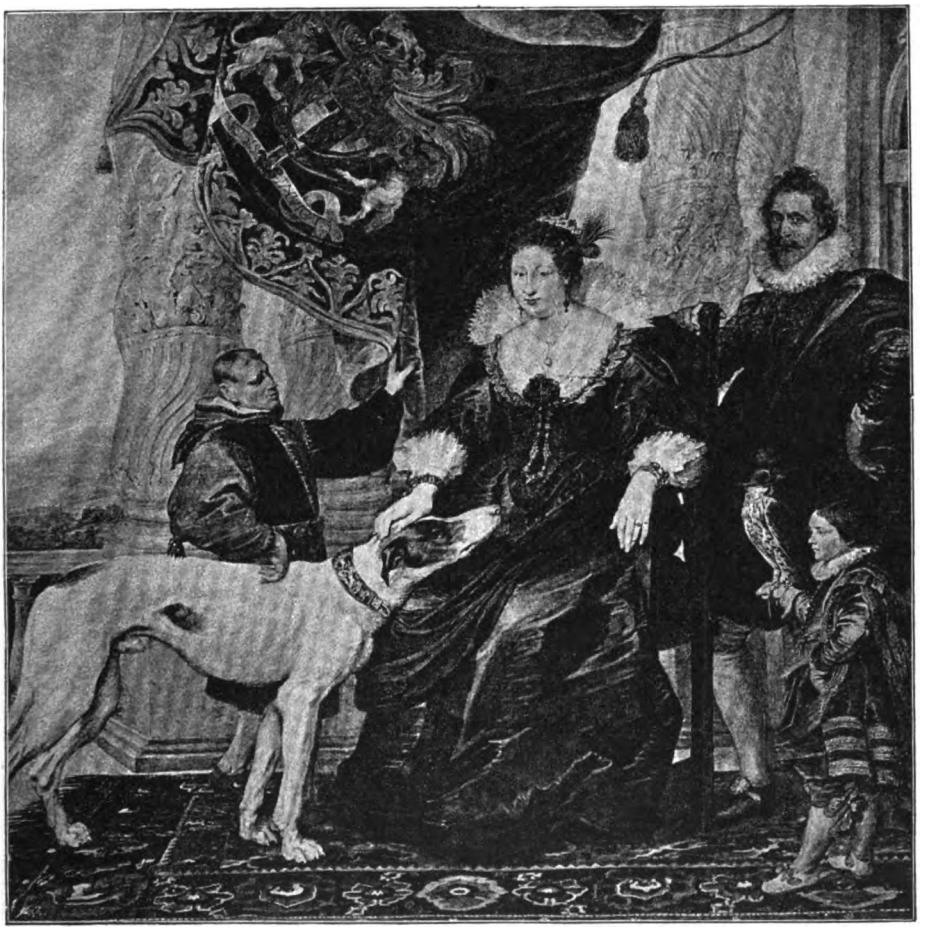

Fig. 63. Count Thomas Arundel and his Wife. In the Pinakothek at Munich.
After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 80.)

done of the entire series. There is a large composition of the same subject in the Liechtenstein Gallery, the origin of which is not known: but another fine example, engraved by Paul Pontius in 1624, is in the Academy at Düsseldorf (Fig. 61), a sketch for which is in the Pinakothek at Munich. When in the year 1805 the Düsseldorf pictures, collected by the Electors Palatine, were brought to Munich, to protect Rome from the French, this picture remained behind. The extremely heavy panel of oak on which it is painted, proved too weighty for the means of transport obtainable in those days, and

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so, in order that the removal of the other works of art might not be delayed, it was left unpacked as it was in the market-place. On account of its weight again it was not taken to Paris, and thus escaped the fate of the unfortunate *Assumption* in the Imperial Collection at Vienna, which to facilitate its transport was sawn into three pieces, by order of the French Deputy-Commissioner Denon. Besides this picture now in the Imperial Museum, which, after an absence of six years, was brought back to Vienna in 1815, there is yet another work of the master, — the most celebrated representation of this subject, — which adorns the high-altar of the Cathedral at Antwerp. Rubens was asked to paint this picture in 1619; but its execution was retarded, so that it was only placed in its position in 1626. We are told that he painted this work, — also a very large one, — in less than 16 days; but that probably only implies the time spent by the master himself over the work; since the collaboration of pupils, whose working days were not counted, can be clearly detected in it.

It was no doubt through Sir Dudley Carleton that Rubens became acquainted with a man, famous in his day as a great Mæcenas, and unrivalled as a collector, especially of antique marbles: Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel. In 1620 the artist painted in one canvas portraits of this patron of the Arts and his wife; a sumptuous picture now in the Pinakothek at Munich. The group might perhaps be better designated as *"Portraits of the Countess of Arundel and her suite"*. In an open hall with spiral marble columns, hung with heavy curtains wheron are richly embroidered the family coat of arms, the floor of which is covered with a magnificent carpet, is seated the Countess, attired in a gown of black silk. With her right hand she caresses a huge hound, who lays his head affectionately in her lap. To her left a small page in a gold-embroidered red dress carrying a falcon on his wrist, implies his mistress' devotion to the chase. She appears also to have kept a sort of jester in her train, for a dwarf dressed in yellow and green stands beside the hound. Behind the Countess' chair, and rather in the background, we may see the Earl of Arundel himself (Fig. 63).

The armistice during which the Netherlands enjoyed the blessings of peace came to an end in 1620. Religious warfare had broken out again in Germany, and the first battle had been decided in favour of the Emperor and the Catholics. The world was anxious to see the likeness of the so-called Victor of the White Mountain: and it was Rubens, who was commissioned to paint it — to be reproduced in numerous etchings. We see the victorious Count Boucquoy, Commander-in-Chief, arrayed in his armour and scarf, and with his baton in his hand, encircled by a wreath of bay and oak-leaves, and surrounded by a number of allegorical figures. We may further perceive towns and rivers in chains beside the altar of Victory; a winged *Nikè* is bearing trophies, whilst Hercules with his club, — Symbol of Power, — crushes to the ground the Hydra and Medusa. Angels holding aloft a chalice and the Popal double cross, — symbol of the Catholic Faith, — crown the Imperial eagle, to whom the *genii* of War and Victory offer the palm

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and the terrestrial globe (Fig. 64). Whilst Rubens designed this sketch (now at the Hermitage), intended for reproduction, most carefully in grey on grey, he was content on other occasions only to heighten similar

Fig. 64. Charles de Longueval, Count Boucquoy. Painted for an engraving by Vorstermann.
In the Hermitage at St. Petersburg.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
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drawings with sepia; as, for instance, the cleverly executed design in the collection of Weimar, representing a warrior, whose name we may probably also seek among the heroes of the Thirty Years War (Fig. 65).

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In 1621 the Archduke Albrecht died. Among the portraits by Rubens' own hand, which have come down to us, of his Prince-patron we must single out the superb equestrian one in the Royal collection at Windsor, of which there is a drawing in the Louvre. It appears that he had also commenced to paint for the Archduke a series of portraits of his ancestors, when the latter's death interrupted the work. At least we may in this way account for certain portraits, which were found among the artist's property

Fig. 65. PORTRAIT OF A GENERAL. For an engraving. Drawing in the Gallery at Weimar.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 81.)

at his death: for instance, one over-life-size of Charles the Bold, and another of the Emperor Maximilian I. Moreover, a picture which probably also owes its existence to the same circumstance is the painting in the Museum at Madrid representing the mediæval legend of Rudolf of Habsburg, commemorated in Schiller's famous Ballad. Rubens conceived this event with considerable sense of humour, depicting the priest, who was no horseman, crossing the surging torrent, mounted on a lively hunter. The picture is remarkable for its subject, since mediæval representations as a rule were most unusual

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at that period. But Rubens, excelling in all directions, once even painted a grand tournament. This work, with its fascinating landscape, in which

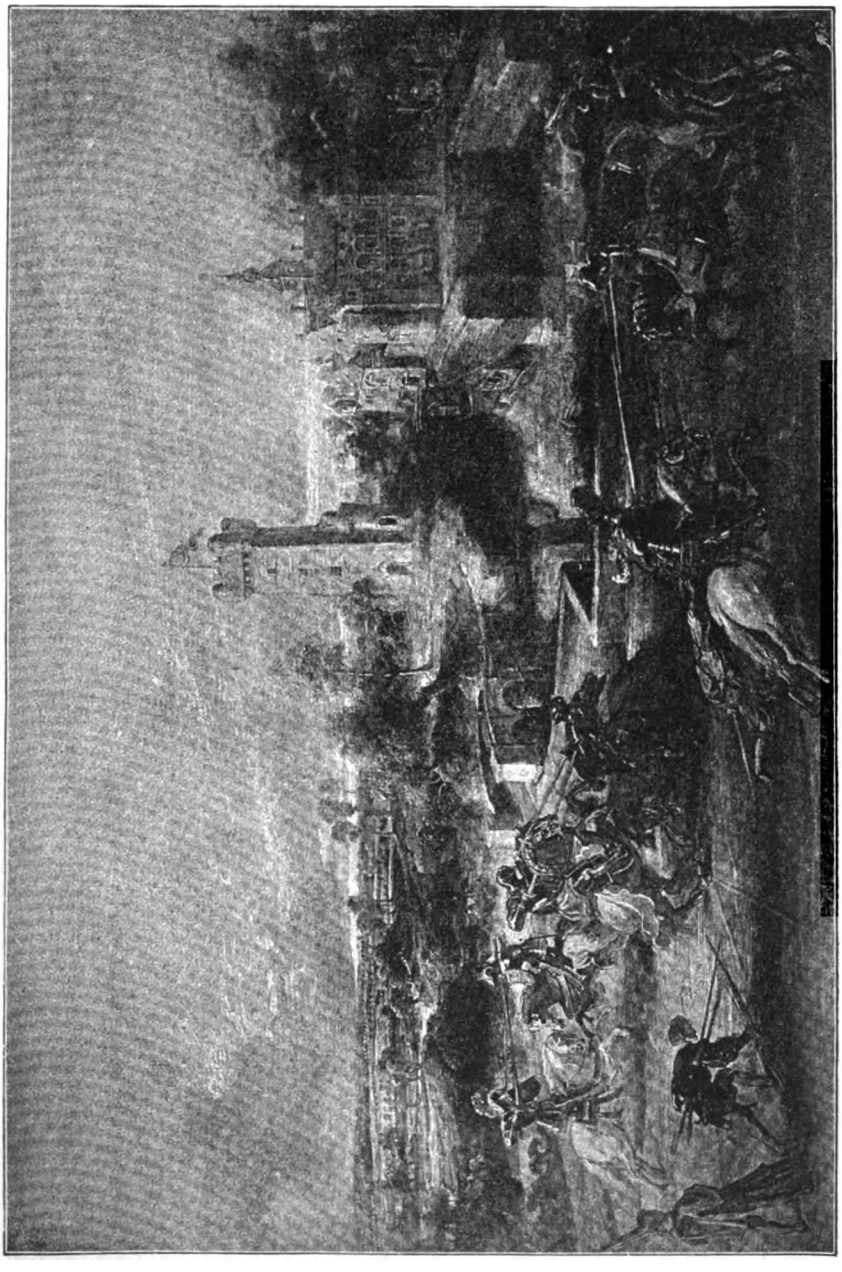

Fig. 66. Tournament outside a Castle. In the Louvre at Paris.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach Paris and New-York. (To page 83.)

appears a mediæval castle with a tall watch-tower, is now in the Louvre (Fig. 66). The Imperial Museum at Vienna also possesses two very carefully executed scenes from Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso,* and Boccaccio's

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Decamerone. Thus the varied capabilities of the artist appear to have been quite without limit. Most surprising is a sketch in the Liechtenstein-collection which shows this painter of impetuous power and wanton extravagance in a sentimental mood. It is the seated figure of a veiled woman mourning over a battle-field. He is said to have specially appreciated those commissions, which gave him the greatest scope for variety of subject:

Fig. 67. Portrait of Baron Heinrich von Wicq. In the Louvre at Paris.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 86.)

and he declared that he enjoyed most those works, which admitted of execution in full sized proportions. With reference to the pictures ordered by the Prince of Wales, he writes on the 13th of September 1621 to W. Trumbull, the English consul at Brussels, "I wished that the painting for the Gallery of H. R. H. the Prince of Wales were of larger dimensions, because it would give me much more courage to express my thoughts with greater freedom and accuracy . . . I must confess that

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my natural talent lies much rather in the direction of producing work conceived on a large scale, than in turning out as it were small curiosities. Every one has his special talent. The task of depicting a great crowd in the most varied attitudes and situations, however extravagant, has never yet proved too much for me."

Fig. 68. Maria de Medici. In the Prado at Madrid.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 86.)

It was in 1621 that he received a commission which, as regards variety and size, left nothing to be desired. Maria de Medici, widow of Henry IV. of France, had returned to Paris after her reconciliation with her son Louis XIII. After taking up her residence in the new Luxembourg Palace, she resolved to adorn a vast gallery with paintings descriptive of her own

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life. For this task her choice fell on Rubens. The Belgian ambassador, Baron von Wicq, of whom the artist painted an excellent portrait, now in the Louvre (Fig. 67), and the Abbé Claude Magis of St. Ambrose, acted as agents. It was probably for this latter gentleman that he painted the magnificent picture of *St. Ambrose, refusing the Emperor Theodosius admission into the church at Milan.* The origin of this picture, which now hangs beside the great Antwerp altarpieces in the Imperial Museum at Vienna, is not known: but there is no doubt that it was painted in 1621, and the choice of that particular Saint seems to refer to the Abbé of St. Ambroise, to whom Rubens was indebted for so great and so welcome a commission. To Baron von Wicq he showed his gratitude by presenting him with a painting of the *Madonna.* In the beginning of 1622 he came to Paris to make arrangements with the Queen herself: and it was on this occasion that he most probably painted the fine portrait of her now in the Museum at Madrid (Fig. 68). Three years later the paintings, representing various scenes from her life, — with the exception of two finished in Antwerp — executed by the master with the help of his pupils, were set up in their intended position. It is said that he painted the two last scenes for this *Medici Gallery* entirely with his own hands, and frequently in the presence of the Queen herself, who seemed to take a delight in watching this celebrated man at work, and who was greatly interested by his conversation. The pictures represent the following scenes: 1) *The Fates arrange the course of the Tuscan Princess' Life;* 2) *Her Birth;* 3) *Her Education;* 4) *Henry IV. sees her portrait and resolves to marry her;* 5) *The Marriage by Proxy* (Fig. 69); 6) *Her Arrival in France;* 7) *The Nuptials;* 8) *The Birth of Louis XIII.;* 9) *Henry IV. starts for the War in Germany:* 10) *Maria de Medici receives the Crown of France;* 11) *The Apotheosis of the murdered King;* 12) *The Queen's Reign;* 13) *Her Military Campaigns at Pont de Cé* (Fig. 70); 14) *The Exchange of the two Brides: i. e. Anna of Austria, Infanta of Spain, and the Princess Elisabeth of France;* 15) *The Blessings of Maria de Medici's Reign;* 16) *She makes over the Government to her son Louis XIII.;* 17) *She retires to Blois;* 18) *She resolves to end her disputes with her son and to come to a peaceful arrangement with him;* 19) *The Conclusion of Peace* (Fig. 71); 20) *Reconciliation between Maria de Medici and Louis XIII.;* 21) *Time at last unveils Truth.* — When, in the summer of 1625, this series of paintings was completed, the admiration they excited was unbounded. They have long been removed from the Palais de Luxembourg; and now hang in a gallery of the Louvre specially built for them. With three exceptions all the sketches made for them by the artist himself are in the Pinakothek at Munich.

If, in the present day, a somewhat depreciatory judgment has been passed upon these work of the master, it is perhaps chiefly due to his having mixed up the Real with the Unreal, the Historical with the Mythological and Symbolical; the Christian with the Heathen, Idea. In those times it would have been impossible not to have surrounded the *Life of a Queen* with the

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splendours of allegory, nor to have omitted the Gods and Goddesses of Olympus from active attendance upon her. An entirely realistic composition, such as perhaps would be approved now, would in those days have been rejected as cold, dull, and devoid of taste. The simple facts of the Life of Maria de Medici, down to the day of her reconciliation with her son, could not have furnished, even to a Rubens, enough stirring and inter-

Fig. 69. The Marriage of Maria de Medici by Proxy.
Sketch for the picture of the Medici Gallery in the Louvre. In the Pinakothek at Munich.
After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 86.)

esting subjects to enliven a whole gallery of life-size pictures, and to supply them with the necessary variates of situation. If anywhere, it was in the design and execution of this *Medici Gallery* that he could give full scope to his imagination: and, in order to treat artistically otherwise dull Events of State, he resolved to transport them to Olympian Heights, and thus confer upon them an appearance of a monumental grandeur. It is perhaps true that in some cases these carefully worked up allegories show

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too clearly that they are the result of calculation: but the greater number are full of the warm life, with which the creative genius of the artist could invest his figures. If the Gods and Goddesses appear occasionally too much like overdressed theatrical personages, they invariably delight the spectator with the charm of their healthy vitality. Splendid personifications of Rubens' ideal of female beauty are the *Fates,* who spin the thread of

Fig. 70. The Journey to Pont de Cé.
Sketch for the picture of the Medici Gallery in the Louvre. In the Pinakothek at Munich.
After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 89.)

the young Princess' life and the *Nymphs,* who accompany the ship, which bears her as a Royal bride to France. The picture of the *Arrival in France,* — if we except the Sea Deity, — who certainly takes up too much room is a faithful representation; since we know that the ship was most gorgeously decorated. *The Marriage of Maria de Medicis by Proxy:* — the old Archduke Ferdinand, as representative of the King of France stood with her before the Altar: — is still more like a picture drawn from actral fact. From an artistic point of view, it would not have mattered in the least had he

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painted a page as train-bearer to the bride; but it was more adapted to the taste of the time to give this function to a naked *putto* (Fig. 69). In most cases however, the principal actors in each scene seem to be merely secondary to the mythological and symbolical figures: or they themselves appear in the guise of *Gods:* as for instance, in the painting which represents the *Nuptials,* in which the Royal Pair figure as *Jupiter and Juno enthroned on*

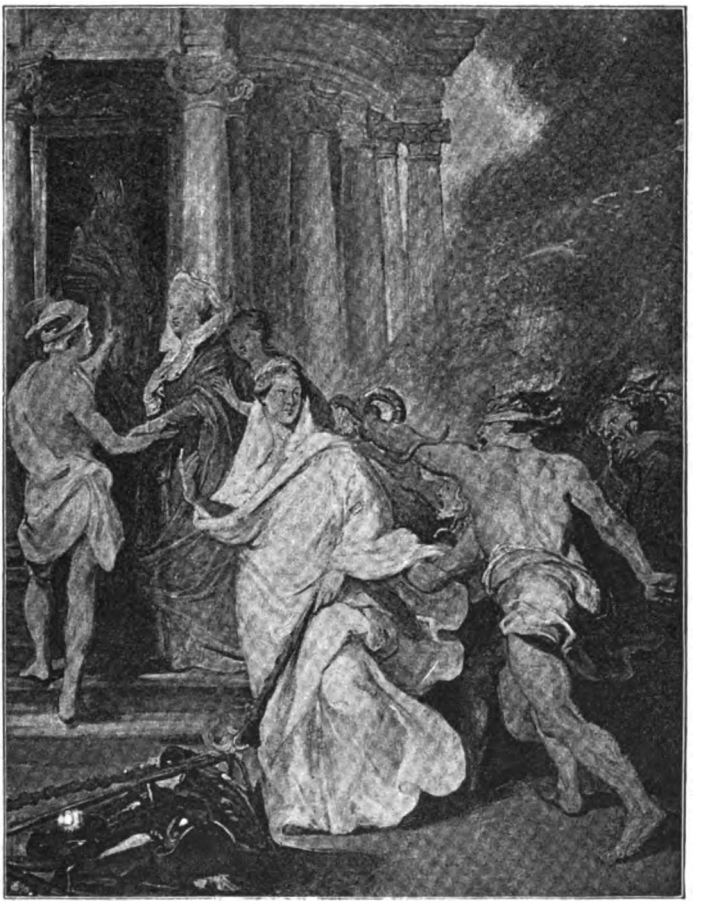

Fig. 71. The Reconciliation.
Sketch for the picture of the Medici Gallery in the Louvre. In the Pinakothek at Munich.
After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 90.)

Olympus, whilst a car drawn by lions indicates the town of Lyons, where the event took place. If we see the *Death of Henry IV.* symbolised by his soaring to Olympian Heights mounted upon an eagle, we need not wonder that Maria de Medici, journeying to Pont de Cé, is represented as *Minerva* on horseback (Fig. 70). The face is here idealized to harmonize with the helmet of the goddess: — although otherwise the Queen always appears in her own likeness; — full of youthful charm in the scenes from her early life

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Fig. 72. Study from the Nude. Drawing in the Albertina at Vienna. After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York. (To page 92.)

and as a stately matron in her later years. Sometimes it is just the realistic appearance of this one head, which gives it so great a prominence amid the surrounding idealized figures; since we can have no doubt that this is the leading personage, in spite of the others who occupy so much of the surrounding space. This is specially evident in the *Conclusion of Peace,* where Her Majesty, haressed fruitlessly by the demons of Envy and Hatred enters the Temple of Peace (Fig. 71). It is true that a great many of these allegories are conceived rather superficially; but there are traits which unquestionably testify power of observation and deep sentiment: as, for instance, where the King examines for the first time the portrait of his Bride; or when the Queen is overcome by the sight of her first-born, and where at the *Reconciliation* she smiles at him through her tears. The whole work is one great thought, executed according to the spirit of the period, and is a creation which fully illustrates the power of Rubens, justly styled "the artist-prince of his time". Maria de Medici was so charmed with these works that, as soon as he had completed them, she commissioned him to execute four more paintings, to adorn the same Gallery. One was a representation of herself as *Minerva:* two more were portraits of her parents, the Grand-Duke and Grand-Duchess of Tuscany: whilst the fourth was to be a likeness of the artist himself. We ought also to relate here a pleasing anecdote: how She once assembled into the artist's presence all her court-ladies to obtain his opinion on

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their respective beauty; and how the lady who seemed to him most worthy of the prize was the Duchess of Guéménée. The Queen would much have liked to bind so famous an artist exclusively to her side: but Rubens wrote to a friend that he was "tired of that court". He was dissatisfied besides, because Her Majesty seemed inclined to withhold the well deserved payment for so great an undertaking and was not even willing to reimburse him for the repeated journeys and expenses consequent on his stay in Paris. Soon after the completion of this work, he therefore returned to Antwerp.

There still exists a letter from him, addressed to Paris. It is without date, so that we do not know whether it refers to his first visit there, or to a second, which he undertook in order to finish the paintings: or perhaps to a subsequent stay in the summer of 1623. In this letter he desires that the sisters Capaio and their niece Louise should be ready for him to make life-size studies from them, for the *Sea-Nymphs*, which "were to accompany the ship in the picture of the *Arrival of the Queen of France*". "It was not easy for him to find so beautiful a black,"— he adds,— "of raven hair": though he seems after all to have preferred his favourite blonde types when he finally executed the painting. It is somewhat strange that an artist, who could master the drawing of his figures with such consummate knowledge and who probably painted most of his allegorical subjects without models, should have thought it necessary sometimes to make studies from life with such very great care. Among these latter the drawings now preserved in the Albertina

Fig. 73. Study of a Head. Drawing in the Albertina at Vienna. After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York. (To page 92.)

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Fig. 74. Study of Heads. Drawing in the Albertina at Vienna.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 92.)

Collection, furnish most perfect examples. They are chiefly sketches of heads (Figs. 72, 73, 74 and 75); probably made for subsequent paintings in order to avoid long sittings. Perhaps also he may have entered them in his sketchbook so as to secure a record of certain persons, whom he had met. This certainly seems to have been the case with a drawing of one of the Archduchess Isabella's fascinating ladies-in-waiting; a sketch which belongs to the artist's early period (Fig. 76): and also with another of a French Marquis, whose name, though attached to the drawing, is illegible. This latter probably dates from one of his lengthened sojourns at Paris (Fig. 78). The picture for which the first-named drawing was a preparatory study is now in the Hermitage at St. Petersburg: and, in spite of the fact that it has been only grounded and has remained unfinished, it nevertheless clearly shows the charm that this great master of colour could attain when he exchanged the pen for the brush (Fig. 77).

Portrait-painting was always Rubens' best opportunity for refreshing his soul at the undefiled source of natural inspiration. In less ambitious

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Fig. 75. Study of a Head. Drawing in red chalk in the Uffizi at Florence.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
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tasks of such a nature, he set aside the exuberant tendencies of his genius, and with the same artistic joy, with which at other times he gave free scope to his boundless imagination, devoted himself to pure and simple realism. There exist portraits, dating from every period of his artistic career, of persons, whose very names are now forgotten, which have come down to us merely as likenesses executed with his own masterful hand. It is in these

Fig. 76. Portrait of a young Lady of the Court of the Infanta Isabella at Brussels.
Drawing in the Albertina at Vienna.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
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works especially that Rubens shows, how faithfully he could, where necessary, adhere to nature, as she presented herself to him, without indulging in any additional accessories (Figs. 79—84). Some of his female portraits, the originals of which are known, have in this way become very famous. Among these there is in the Museum at Brussels, a portrait of *Jakelyne de Caestre,* the refined and delicate looking wife of a sturdy country gentleman, painted in 1618; and another in the Louvre of a youthful lady, a member of the Boonen family, who fascinates the spectator by her dark mysterious eyes

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(Fig. 85). There is also the famous portrait known by the name of *Chapeau de Paille,* — a mistake for *chapeau de poil* — in the National Gallery in London, which represents a Fräulein Lunden of Antwerp; who gazes with bright expressive eyes from under her broad hat. Legends state her to have been a sweet-heart of the artist.

Fig. 77. Portrait of a young Lady of the Court of the Infanta Isabella.
In the Hermitage at St. Petersburg.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
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On the other hand it has been said by some authorities that portrait-painting was really the weakest side of Rubens' Art, and it has even been asserted that his conception of the personages painted by him was only a superficial one, — resembling rather a photograph; — since they only convey the expression worn during the time of the sitting, and do not penetrate into the inner life of the sitter: in fact that they are lacking in the very thing which would alone make them great works of art. This opinion may perhaps

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Fig. 78. Portrait of a Marquis (name illegible) of the Court of Maria de Medici.
Drawing in the Albertina at Vienna.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 92.)

be applied to a few of them, but it is certainly not applicable in general. To name one example only out of many, let us take the portrait painted in 1624 of Rubens' learned friend Dr. van Thulden, now in the Pinakothek at Munich. This portrait clearly shows that Rubens thoroughly understood the representation of the spiritual as well as of the physical aspect of a sitter (Fig. 86). Among the portraits of historical personages of the period between 1621–1625 we should mention first that of the Spanish Commander-in-chief, *Ambrose Spinola,* with whom the artist was on terms of personal friendship, although he once stated to a friend that "Spinola had no more comprehension of Art than a common domestic". This portrait is now in the Gallery at Brunswick, where there is besides another portrait by the artist, of an unknown personage, and an early

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work representing Judith with the head of Holophernes. There is also in the Picture-Gallery at Cassel a remarkable life-size portrait, painted about the year 1624. It is of a stout man, with common features and rough hands, arrayed in rich oriental attire (Fig. 87). The original of this portrait was probably however not a Turk, but one of those Christian Levantine merchants who had it painted to send to his relations in his native land. The picture itself gives us a clue to the place from whence this man came, for we may see on the handle of a big palm-leaf in the background the arms of the Christian City of Constantinople, which date back to Latin times. These are unfortunately not visible in the small illustration.

Rubens again made use of this same bizarre personality for the figure of the Moorish King in *an Adoration of the Magi,* painted as an altarpiece for the Abbey-Church of St. Michael. This painting, now in the Museum at Antwerp is 6 ft. high by 3 ft. 20 wide and was painted by the master himself in 1624 in the short space of 13 days. It may be inferior in some respects to his other representations of the same subject: but it is unsurpassed in its fascinating charm of glowing colour.

The most productive and brilliant period of the artist's career was perhaps, between the years 1620 and 1625; for, notwithstanding the pressure of work, which those two vast undertakings: the frescoes for the Jesuit Church at Antwerp and the completion of the Medici Gallery in Paris: must have involved — not to mention other commissions of greater or lesser importance undertaken by him,— Rubens seems yet to have found time to paint pictures for his own personal pleasure. Thus most of the artist's Mythological subjects: — *Judgments of Paris, Rapes of Helen,* or *of Nymphs,* representations of the *Three Graces,* of *Venus,* of *Diana,* and of *Satyrs,* &c. — appear to belong to this period. Since the master always

Fig. 79. Portrait of a Man. In the Pinakothek at Munich. After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 94.)

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courted the chance of painting from the nude, it is easy to understand why, when he worked for his own pleasure, he usually chose subjects from Classical Legends.

But History also often afforded him stimulating subjects. Thus in the Louvre we find a representation of the *Scythian Queen, Tomyris, ordering the head of Cyrus to be dipped in blood:* a painting, the rich colours of which

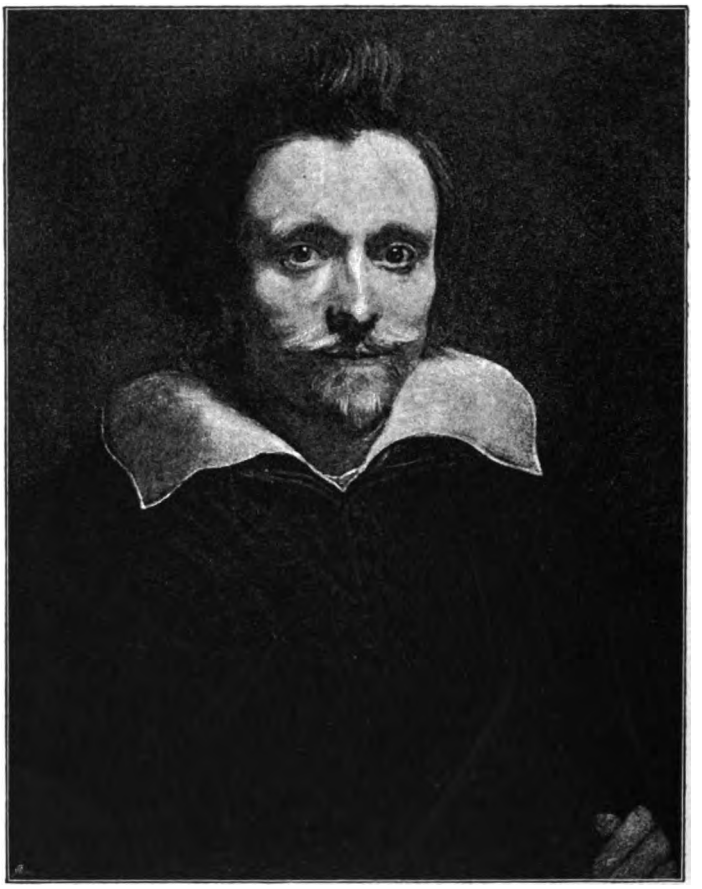

Fig. 80. Portrait of a Man. In the Dresden Gallery.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 94.)

bear no unfavourable comparison with Paolo Veronese's *Marriage in Cana of Galilee.* In Munich there is a *Death of Seneca,* a gloomy composition in accordance with the spirit of the subject, and at Buckingham Palace a *Pythagoras lecturing to his pupils.* Besides these scenes taken from profane History, there are also some drawn from the Old Testament, such as, for example, the impressive painting, at Munich, of the *Reconciliation of Iacob and Esau* (Fig. 88). This last-named picture offers once more a curious instance of those repetitions, which it pleased the artist to introduce;—not

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however as a whole, but in the separate groups. Among the women placed by Jacob at the head of his train to inspire the pity of his brother's approaching host, in the foreground we may notice a graceful woman on her knees beside her two children. This group similarly arranged but with a different expression appears again, as *Latona with her twins Apollo and Diana fleeing from the jealous wrath of Juno,* by magic art transforming into frogs, the

Fig. 81. Portrait of a Lady. In the Dresden Gallery.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
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Lycian peasants who had maliciously defiled the water, wherewith she desired to quench her thirst (Fig. 89). The fine landscape in this picture is not by Rubens himself, but is probably by Lucas van Uden, a young landscape-painter, who placed his talents at the service of the great master; as Snyders did in the case of animals and Breughel of flowers. It was again though only as a saving of time that he thus sought the help of other artists: for it is well known that he himself was a first rate painter of landscapes. It was apparently also during these years that he began to paint pictures

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where the landscape was the chief object and the figures only accessories. We find such works mentioned for the first time in a list dated 1625, two of which are now in the Royal Galleries at Windsor. One of these represents a Winter scene. In a wide plain covered with snow, some beggars have assembled around a fire lighted beneath a pent-house. The dark wooden cottage, the white snow and the red glow of the fire, combined with the cold light of the wintry day, form effective contrasts, from which the master has succeeded in creating a particularly attractive picture. The other displays a day in bright Summer. A landscape spreading out behind into the far-off distance is in the foreground enlivened by numerous figures of peasants going to market with horses and carts. These two master-pieces belong to a series of *The Four Seasons*, of which *Autumn*, a grandly conceived scene at early morn, is in the National Gallery, whilst *Spring* is in a private collection in London.

An exquisite picture, representing the *Departure of Lot from Sodom*, and bearing the date 1625, is in the Louvre. Against a background of dark grey and brilliant yellow clouds, from which demons hurl down fire upon the town, the fugitives are setting out; upon whom a flood of light pours from the city gates. Foremost goes the Patriarch himself, led by an angel who appears to be urging him on. Behind him, his weeping wife is pushed forward by another angel with curly brown hair, whose youthful features form a curious contrast to the wrinkled face of the old woman. Last come his daughters, one of whom leads a donkey by its bridle; while the other, a very fine figure, carries on her head a basket of fruit. The *Expulsion of Hagar by Abraham* at the Hermitage, executed with the same care, is considered to be a companion picture to the painting just described; whilst the beautiful and effective *Resurrection of Lazarus* in the Berlin Museum, seems also to owe its origin to about the same period.

The altar-piece in one of the chapels of the Cathedral of St. Bavon at Ghent also dates either before or soon after the completion of the Medici Gallery. It consists of two pictures placed one above the other. In the upper portion we see *St. Bavon* in full armour, kneeling before a priest at a church door and renouncing the world to become a monk: below in the chief group we observe the Saint dividing his property among the poor, whilst some beautiful women, looking on, prepare to follow his example. It has been said of this picture that it rather encourages its admirers in love of luxury than in a desire to become disciples of St. Bavon: which is scarcely to be wondered at, in a work by Rubens. But we must nor forget that the entire tendency emanating from the Jesuit order was in the direction of display and external show.

With the year 1625 a period of rich activity throughout which the master was able to live for his art alone comes to a close; and a time in his life commences, during which, according to his own expression, he had to keep one foot continually in the stirrup in the service of sovereigns. It would seem that in 1623 he for the first time entered into the domain of politics: at least

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he discusses with a relation, who held a distinguished appointment in Holland, the possibility of inducing the Northern Netherlands to consent to a renewal of the armistice with Spain. There is a passage in a letter dated Oct. 13, 1624 from the English Ambassador at Brussels, William Trumball, which shows that influential persons seemed to give great weight to the efforts exercised in that direction by so distinguished and talented a man. It says:

Fig. 82. Portrait of a Man. In the Hermitage at St. Petersburg.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
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"First of all I would wish to mention a secret armistice and peace transaction, directed by Peter Paul Rubens, the celebrated painter, between the United Provinces and those which still belong to the dominions of the King of Spain. A proof which, according to my modest opinion, shows that they (the Spaniards), in spite of their trying to get Breda (a fort most obstinately defended by the Dutch), are thoroughly tired of the war, and would be content to lay down their arms . . . That is why the Marquis Spinola so firmly resolved either to capture Breda, or to bury his corpse and his honour

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in its defences". It stands to reason that Rubens did not carry on these negotiations wholly on his own account, but that he acted at the instigation of the Infanta Isabella. It is certainly strange that this Princess should have confided such offices to the painter. But Rubens was in many respects, and by no means only as a painter, a highly gifted man. He possessed great culture and was known to express himself with eloquence. Intelligent, clever, sincere and amiable, and possessed of a due amount of self-consciousness, he was withal modest by nature. He took wide views on things in general and combined with a clear judgment a firm and unswerving will. Thus the personal esteem that he enjoyed was almost as great and universal as his artistic fame. This is confirmed by the fact that Philip IV. of Spain, — as an existing document proves, — raised him and his legitimate heirs, — it would seem at his own request, — to the ranks of the nobility: "In consideration of the great excellence and rare merit that he had attained in Painting,

Fig. 83. Portrait of a young Lady. In the Hermitage at St. Petersburg.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 94.)

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Fig. 84. PORTRAIT OF AN OLD LADY. In the Hermitage at St. Petersburg.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 94.)

together with his knowledge of History and Languages; besides many other qualities and talents which combine to make him truly worthy of such Royal favour." In this same document the coat of arms which Rubens was to bear is described as follows: "A diagonal escutcheon: on the upper half, a black hunting horn on a field or, and two cinquefoiled roses with gold-tipped petals; on the lower one a lily or on a field azure, and an open vizored helmet enriched in argent and or. As crest a lily or."

It was at the court of Maria de Medici and through the acquaintanceship made there with the Duke of Buckingham that first inspired Rubens with the desire to occupy himself seriously, and not merely occasionally, with the entangled threads of his country's politics. This English peer and ambitious favourite of the young King, Charles I., whom he governed as completely as he had previously done his father James I., came to Paris in April 1625 to make the necessary arrangements for the marriage, then contem-

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plated and which shortly afterwards took place between his Royal master and the Princess Henrietta Maria of France. There was in his suite a certain Gerbier, his confidant, by profession a painter; but who, in the service of the Duke, had developed into a clever diplomatic agent.

No sooner had Buckingham made the acquaintance of the muchcourted Dutch painter, for whom he always subsequently entertained a great regard, than he desired to have his portrait painted by him. Rubens executed the grand equestrian painting, now in the Pitti Palace in Florence; for which together with another portrait of the Duke, he received the princely present of an entire service in silver, valued at 2000 crowns. He reserved for himself, however, the admirable and life-like drawing of the Duke so celebrated for his good looks,—which is now in the Albertina Collection at Vienna (Fig. 90).

While Rubens was busy painting the Duke of Buckingham, he was at the same time negotiating with Gerbier and making proposals with the object of securing peace for his country. One passage from the report of these negotiations fully illustrates the master's point of view: "Mr. Rubens," says the writer therein (probably Gerbier himself), "in his conversation with the Duke showed a praiseworthy interest in the Christian Cause", —meaning the Roman Catholic Faith. After his departure from France and during the rupture between England and Spain, Rubens frequently wrote to Gerbier greatly deploring the circumstances and expressing his longing to restore the golden period which had gone by. He besought Gerbier to inform the Duke of Buckingham how grieved the Infanta was as to the state of affairs, &c.; and he further explained that Her Highness ought not to be compelled to suffer from these unfortunate circumstances, since she had not taken part in the disputes of either party, nor contributed in any way to their dissensions, but had felt throughout that there ought to be friendly relations between them. She also thought that, if the King of Great Britain intended to demand the Restoration of the Elector Frederic V., the exiled King of Bohemia,—whose wife was a sister of Charles I.,—he would have to look to the King of Spain, who presumably had the power to carry out such a Restoration; but that the actual understanding and the good terms which had always existed between England and the Infanta ought not suffer from this, since there exist no questions of variance between them.

During the following years we find Rubens entirely wrapt up in politics. At the instigation of the Infanta and the Marquis Spinola he had exchanged with Gerbier, and occasionally also with the Duke of Buckingham himself, a lively correspondence with a view to bringing about an armistice between the King of Spain, the Kings of England and Denmark, and the United Provinces. In the end, however, it was impossible to do everything by correspondence, and Rubens had to travel hither and thither for verbal conferences.

The restless life of a diplomat seems to have been at this period particularly congenial to him; for an event had recently happened, which, for a time,

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Fig. 85. Portrait of a Lady of the Boonen Family. In the Louvre at Paris.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
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made him shun not only his home, but also his studio. Both had now become desolate for him, since his wife had died in the summer of 1626. What she had been to him is best described in his own words, written in a letter dated July 15th of that year. "Truly," he says, "I have lost a most exceptional companion. One could not do otherwise than love her. Nay! what do I say? one was forced to love her, for the simple reason that she had not one of the faults of her sex. No bad humour, no womanly weaknesses, nothing but loving kindness and a great sense of the fitness of things. Her virtues endeared her to everyone during her life, and after her death they caused general regret. Such a loss appears to me great indeed; and as the only means of combating sorrow is to forget,—which result, however, can only be achieved after a lapse of time,—forgetting seems for me, to be the only resource. But how difficult it will be to separate the sorrow that this loss has caused me, from the sacred memory which I shall cherish of her, all my life! A longer journey perhaps would be opportune to take me away from so many things which again and again seem to renew my grief. Thus Dido in Virgil's *Æneid* mourned alone in her desolate home, attaching herself to objects, which were left to her as the only remembrance of the past. It is the everchanging scenes, which thrust themselves before us when travelling, that occupy the imagination and subdue the sorrow of the heart. But I shall have to travel in the society of my own lonely self, and with no company but my own sad thoughts."

There is in the Hermitage at St. Petersburg a magnificent life-size portrait of Isabella Brant painted during the last years of her life. Attired with great elegance she is seated in a red chair. Her bodice is of rich brocade, and her red shirt is interwoven with gold. In one hand she holds a peacock's-feather fan: in the other a white rose. Her features look somewhat drawn, but her blooming complexion does not show any sign of illness. Her eyes are as bright as in the pictures painted of her in early youth, whilst a pleasant smile seems ever ready on her lips. In the background we may notice a piece of architecture, with which the master had adorned his garden (Fig. 91).

Rubens caused his wife to be interred in the same grave in the Church of St. Michael which contained the body of his mother.

Her two sons were the dearest memorials that she left to her husband: her little daughter had died long before while still of a tender age. One of the finest works of the artist is the full-sized portrait-group of his two boys. Judging from their age this must have been painted shortly after Isabella's death. Although the time of the much-occupied master was just then so much taken up, that, contrary to his own wishes, he had often to reduce his own work and to make over to his pupils a great part of his commissions, he painted every line of these two pictures himself, putting into them the whole-souled devotion that he cherished for his beloved ones and all the artistic enthusiasm that he was capable of. It would even

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appear that he executed with his own hands entirely this portrait-group of his two boys twice over, since two copies exist. If the one at the Liechtenstein Gallery shows a special charm through its careful execution, the other at Dresden seems likewise so perfect that it is difficult to suppose that Rubens himself did not paint it the whole of it also. Albert, the elder boy, leaning against a pillar, is dressed in black; whilst a book under his right arm marks the studious tastes, through which he acquired at an

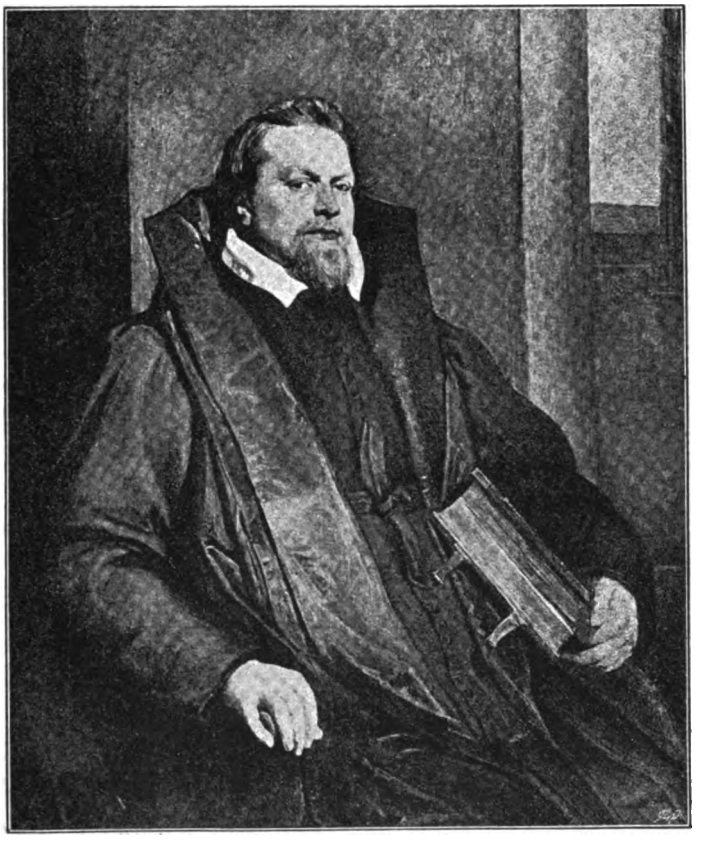

Fig. 86. Portrait of Dr. van Thulden. In the Pinakothek at Munich.
After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 96.)

early age such remarkable knowledge that the King of Spain chose him at the age of sixteen for a high appointment. His left arm and hand, in which he holds a furred glove is lightly passed around the shoulder of his younger brother, still a mere child, dressed in paler garments. The whole attention of the younger boy is concentrated on his plaything, a chained goldfinch. This group is one of the greatest master-pieces in the art of portraiture. The two boys literary live before us, and the artistic charm of the colour with its lights and shadows has been but rarely equalled in any other work of art (Figs. 92—93).

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In the autumn of 1625, when the Duke of Buckingham in the name of Charles I. had come over to negotiate with the United Provinces of the Netherlands, he had seen in Antwerp Rubens' splendid Collection of Art, and had expressed a wish to acquire it. At that time the artist was unwilling to part with his treasures. Later on, however, when his home had become desolate and he had lost *his greatest jewel,* he at length consented to meet the urgent wishes of the Duke, and allowed his agent, a certain Le Blond, to make a selection to the value of 100,000 florins among his Antique and Renaissance marbles, his alabaster, bronze and ivory statues, his gems, and his paintings by Leonardo, Raphael, Titian, Palma Vecchio, Tintoretto, Bassano, Paolo Veronese and himself. It was also agreed that the purchaser should at his own expense have a cast made of every individual statue that he removed to occupy its empty space. Thus in 1627 the greater part of Rubens' Collection came to England: but, when in 1649 Buckingham's possessions were confiscated and many of the pictures came back for sale to Antwerp, they were bought by the Archduke Leopold of Austria, and thus they now form part of the Imperial Museum at Vienna.

Fig. 87. Portrait of a Levantine. In the Cassel Gallery. After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 97.)

The *dilettante* tastes of Buckingham gave Rubens a pretext for undertaking, without attracting attention, a journey to Holland, the object of which

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was really political. He had very much at heart the completion of that "beautiful masterwork" as he described it in a letter to Buckingham, the Reconciliation between Spain and England. After a conference at Brussels with the Abate della Scaglia, Ambassador of the Duke of Savoy, he wrote

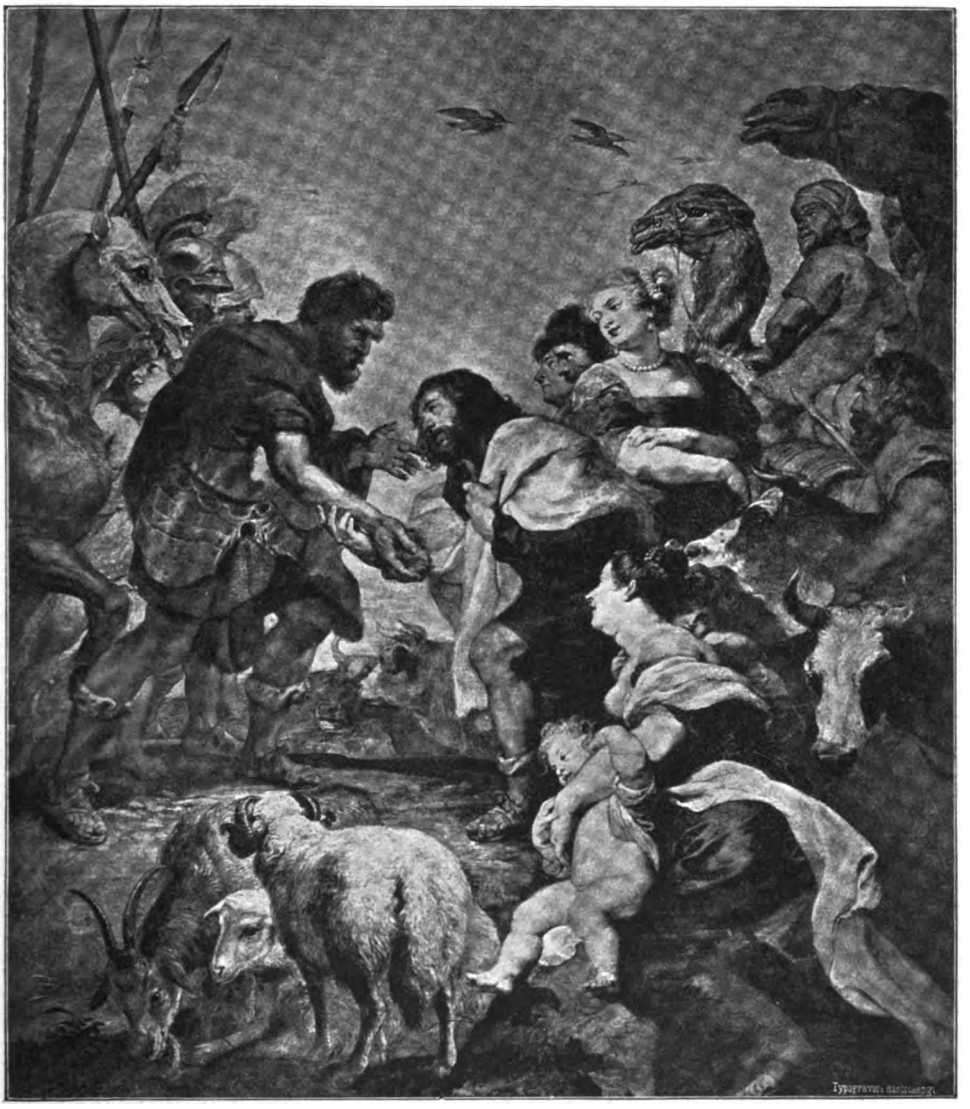

Fig. 88. The Reconciliation of Esau and Jacob. In the Pinakothek at Munich. After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 98.)

a long letter to Gerbier, dated May 1627, in which proper names are indicated by numbers only, and which he desires his correspondents to show to Buckingham alone and then to burn immediately. Therein he writes that he hopes great things from personal interviews with Gerbier himself, with Scaglia and with Lord

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Carleton, who had just been appointed Ambassador to the United Provinces of the Netherlands. He therefore begs his correspondent to procure him a passport for Holland. Gerbier came over immediately with Carleton to the Hague: and before May, Rubens received a passport enabling him to travel without any hindrance to Holland, accompanied by a train of servants and baggage, with the alleged object of treating with Gerbier as to the Duke's acquisition of pictures and other works of Art. For certain reasons, which Rubens does not communicate to us in his letters, the Infanta wished that at first he should not go beyond Zevenberghen in the North Brabant; but Carleton, on the other hand, was afraid that a meeting between Gerbier and Rubens in so small a town on the frontier would be certain to attract attention, and that the political objects of it would therefore not remain a

Fig. 89. Latona and the Lycian Peasants. In the Pinakothek at Munich. (To page 99.)

secret. For this reason Rubens returned to Brussels in order to get the Archduchess' permission to extend his travels. Even then, however, he avoided the Hague. The Piedmontese Envoy had an interview with him at Delft, but the English Ambassador refrained from a similar expedition for fear lest it should be talked about. Nevertheless Gerbier travelled for some time from one Dutch town to another in Rubens' company; the two artists concealing the true cause of their cooperation behind studio-visits and the purchase of pictures. This journey caused great uneasiness to the cautious Lord Carleton, for he was afraid lest the deception should become known, and Rubens be sent in disgrace out of the country as a "Spanish emissary". He therefore warned the painter not to run risks which might bring injury on others also. Rubens, however, so thoroughly understood how to keep the real object of his journey secret, that the German painter and art-historian, Joachim von Sandrart, to whom was granted the favour of accompanying

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the great artist, never even suspected anything; for when he afterwards referred to the days spent with the great master he only relates a variety of studio stories. Precautions were carried so far that, when, later on, Rubens returned to Antwerp, he arranged that letters from Holland on

Fig. 90. The Duke of Buckingham. In the Collection of Drawings in the Albertina at Vienna. After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
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matters of State should only be sent to him under fictitious names. But with all this, very little result was really obtained; for the English Ambassador seemed dissatisfied with the verbal assurances of the Infanta Isabella, and the Marquis Spinola objected to them as securities for arriving at final terms. He desired to see the document authorizing Rubens to act for the King of Spain. The Spanish Ambassador, Don Diego de Mexia,

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who was expected at Brussels as a Messiah, did not however turn up: and was said to have fallen ill in Paris in consequence of a carriage accident. When at last he did reach Brussels, he did not seem in the least inclined to unite in the efforts for Peace that were being urged on there, and which also had the support of the Envoy from Savoy. In Paris, on the contrary, he had been carrying on negotiations between the Sovereigns

Fig. 91. Portrait of Isabella Brant. In the Hermitage at St. Petersburg.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
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of Spain and France as to the defence of their respective kingdoms, to which negotiations Rubens very justly referred in the following terms: "We believe that this League will be like thunder without lightning, which makes a noise in the air without producing any effect. For it is an alliance of different temperaments brought together contrary to their respective natures and powers, and directed by passion rather than by reason." In spite of the strenuous efforts of the Belgian Court to bring about Peace, the whole matter seemed to collapse, and Gerbier was recalled to England.

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Fig. 92. The Artist's Sons, Albert and Nicholas. In the Liechtenstein Gallery at Vienna. After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co. Dornach, Paris and New-York. (To page 107.)

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Rubens himself could only advise warlike operations, as the sole means of exerting pressure on Spain. He however, once more commenced diplomatic action when the Marquis Spinola went to Madrid in the beginning of 1628, and in the month of March of that year wrote to Buckingham in connection with a letter from Spinola at Madrid, that "Philip IV., who had no real confidence in France, would be very much inclined to make peace with those with whom he was at war". In May the artist was visited at Antwerp by the Earl of Carlisle, English Ambassador to the Hague, who was then on his way to Italy. In the course of their conversation, the painter assured the ambassador, that Spain was longing to make peace with England; and he, moreover, arranged an audience for Carlisle with the Archduchess.

The great talents shown by Rubens in this matter of securing peace were recognised and rewarded by the Archduchess Isabella, who in 1628 appointed him her chamberlain: whilst Philip IV. summoned him to Madrid in the same year to report personally on these long and wearisome negotiations. The skilful statesman and famous artist was received at the Spanish capital with great honour: Apartments were assigned to him in the Royal Palace; and he was visited daily by the King. Among the persons at court with whom he was on terms of friendly intercourse was Velasquez, the greatest portrait-painter of all time, then 29 years of age, and preparing to climb with giantstrides the topmost heights of his fame. Rubens remained eight months in Madrid; and there he again had time and opportunity to devote himself to his art. Philip IV. commissioned him to execute portraits, intended as presents for the Infanta Isabella: of all the members of the Royal Family, and he also repeatedly painted the King and Queen themselves. Two of these portraits in which, according to Spanish custom, both Philip and his Queen Elizabeth are dressed in black later on reached St. Petersburg. The stern gloom of Spanish pride is undeniably present in both of them. Philip, with the conspicuous underlip so characteristic of the Habsburgs, looks unimportant but the features of his still youthful Queen have a peculiar charm, and display an expression of vague melancholy, as if she did not feel very happy in her position as Queen of "Both the Indies" (Figs. 94 and 95). In another picture, now in the Louvre, ordered by Elizabeth, probably for Louis XIII., the French King's daughter is represented in a rich and fashionable dress although here also we find in her face, — which is perhaps rather colder in expression, — the same melancholy traits. In the rendering of her fair and delicate complexion, her transparent white ruff, her brilliant jewelry and splendid robe of gold coloured brocade; of the massed light encircling her head; and the pictorial effect which he was able to extract from an otherwise stiff-fashion of costume, Rubens displays a master hand (Fig. 96).

The King gave many other commissions to the artist, amongst which was the large and idealized equestrian portrait of Philip II., — who had died

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thirty years before, — which shill adorns the Prado Museum. His Royal patron also desired him to copy paintings by Titian, and to make sketches for tapestries to decorate the apartments of his own palace. They were

Fig. 93. Rubens' Sons. From the picture in the Dresden Gallery.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 107.)

to represent scenes both mythological and allegorical, and also from the gospels. Of the designs for these latter subjects there is one in the Louvre, executed on a larger scale than those in the Prado Museum. It is a

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Fig. 94. PHILIP IV., KING OF SPAIN. In the Hermitage at St. Petersburg.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 114.)

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Fig. 95. Elizabeth of France, Queen of Spain. In the Hermitage at St. Petersburg.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 114.)

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somewhat over-crowded composition representing the *Triumph of the Catholic Faith,* a work, very celebrated at the time, which has been multiplied not only by engravings, but also by the numerous copies still to be found in many churches in Belgium.

Rubens had entrusted his children at home to the care of certain of his intimate friends. The eldest was taken charge of by Johann Kaspar Gevaerts, town-clerk of Antwerp and Historian to the Emperor Ferdinand III.; a learned man, celebrated for his historical acquirements, whose portrait by the hand of his artist friend has come down to us and is now in the Antwerp Museum. To him the master wrote from Madrid on December 29. 1628: "Pray keep my little Albert where you keep my picture, not in your oratory, nor in the shrine of your household gods, but in your own Temple of Science and Knowledge. I love the boy and I recommend him to you, Prince of Friends and Guide of the Muses, that you may undertake the care of him during my life and also after my death, in conjunction with my father-in-law and brother-in-law Brant." — This correspondence with his learned friend was carried on in Latin; though on other occasions he generally wrote in French or Italian — especially preferring the latter language, which was in most general use at that date — only employing Flemish in letters of a particularly intimate nature.

During his sojourn in Madrid Rubens' political activity was continually to the fore; although he was specially honoured also as a great artist, of whom the King was proud.

In the beginning of 1629 we find him once more in communication with Carlisle and Scaglia, who had come from Brussels to Madrid to talk matters over with him. The assassination of the Duke of Buckingham on August 23. 1628 had put an untimely end to the negotiations between this unfortunate nobleman and the painter. No records have come down to us of the conversations which took place between the hot-tempered Count Olivarez and Rubens whilst the latter was painting the portrait of that mighty minister, whose personal hatred of Buckingham was the chief cause of the failure of the peace negotiations between Spain and England. This much however is certain, that Olivarez in the spring of 1629 at last resolved himself to commence proposals for peace with the English court. To this end Rubens was sent to London with the necessary directions, and on the 28th of April the day before the artist started on his mission Scaglia wrote to Carlisle to that effect. In order to invest him beforehand with greater dignity the King appointed him Secretary to his Privy Council, and gave him a valuable diamond ring as a mark of his personal good will. He was not to act publicly as Ambassador of Spain, for that appointment had been given to Don Carlos Coloma — but was to bear the title of Ambassador from the Archduchess Isabella. For this reason he travelled via Brussels. On the 12th of May he reached Paris and from that visit dates probably the vigorous drawing — so true to life — of the aged Maria de Medici, still in the Louvre (Fig. 97). This Queen had a fresh commission for him, for,

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as a complement to the incidents of her own life, she wished Rubens to depict also in another long series of paintings those of Henry IV. But Rubens could not stay long in Paris, nor could he devote much time to his conferences with the Infanta. After a very short rest in his own house we find him at the end of May, at Dunkirk, where, being afraid of the Dutch, he had to wait several days for an English vessel. On the 5th of June he arrived in London.

Fig. 96. ELIZABETH OF FRANCE. In the Louvre at Paris.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
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The friend of both Buckingham and Carlisle, he was a most welcome ambassador at the English court, and one who did not need the warm recommendations with which Coloma and Scaglia had furnished him. Moreover the unfortunate Charles Stuart,no less a lover of art than Philip IV., was overjoyed to receive so famous a painter at his court. During the whole of his stay in London Rubens was the personal guest of His Majesty; and the artist, entrusted to negotiate terms of peace, presented his Royal host with a most appropriate present in the shape of a picture, representing the *Benefits of Peace.* This painting, sold and taken to Italy after the death of

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Charles I., returned to London and was acquired by the National Gallery in 1827. The peace negotiations did not, however, make such rapid progress as might have been expected, for it was France, led by Richelieu, that now tried to frustrate the reconciliation between England and Spain; and it was not until November 1630 that the agreement, for which the painter had worked so long and so assiduously, was at length concluded.

Fig. 97. Marie di Medici. Drawing in the Louvre.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 118.)

Among the attendants that the artist had brought with him from Brussels was a priest, who acted as his private chaplan. This gentleman lost his life soon after his arrival in England. Whilst taking part in a boating excursion to Greenwich arranged by Barozzi, Secretary to the Piemontese Embassy, the boat when passing under London Bridge capsized and he was drowned. It has sometimes been suggested that Rubens himself had on this occasion narrowly escaped drowning; but in the letter of Lord

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Fig. 98. HELENA FOURMENT AS A BRIDE. In the Pinakothek at Munich.
After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 124.)

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Dorchester relating to an English politician this incident, there is no mention of Rubens having been present at all. The artist however had certainly on former occasions been in danger of his life, for in 1622 a man, supposed to be a lunatic, tried to murder him, and certain friends of his thought it necessary to procure from the Infanta a special protection for him. Three years later, while in Paris, he was present with some members of the English Embassy to view the festivities arranged in honour of the nuptials of Henrietta Maria, when all at once the overcrowded balcony on which they were standing collapsed, and Rubens was only just able to save himself by clinging to that portion of it that still held firm.

In London Rubens did not want for artistic occupation. The Flemish master soon received commissions from Charles I. He painted for him a *St. George*, giving to the Saint the features of His Majesty; and also designed a magnificent dish to be executed in silver representing the *Birth of Venus*. Both these works were sold at the King's death and only quite recently found their way back to London. The *St. George* is now in the Royal Collection at Buckingham Palace, while the *Birth of Venus* is in the National Gallery. Moreover Rubens also made eight cartoons for tapestries to adorn the Royal apartments, illustrating the *Story of Achilles*. These are now dispersed in various English collections. The chief commission, however, which Charles gave the painter was the decoration of the ceiling of the Banqueting Hall at Whitehall, representing the *Apotheosis of James I.* When the new Palace of Whitehall was completed nine years previously, and while Charles Stuart was still Prince of Wales, he had intended that the Antwerp master should execute this task. Rubens filled the nine sections of the ceiling with boldly foreshortened allegorical figures, seen in perspective from below, and with charming friezes adorned with *putti*: but we must not find fault with him, because these allegorical compositions are painted according to the somewhat bombastic taste of the time. At first he only made sketches for these vast compositions. Their execution gave him several years occupation at home, so that it was not until the autumn of 1635 that they arrived at their final destination.

On the 23rd September 1629 Rubens in recognition of his learning received from the University of Cambridge the Honorary Degree of Master of Arts: but there also awaited him another distinction conferred by the King himself, as a reward for his services as statesman. On the 21st of February 1630 Peter Paul Rubens as Archducal Ambassador was knighted by Charles I. The ceremony took place as usual at Whitehall, with all the necessary pomp displayed on such occasions: and, after receiving this dignity the King with his own hand further presented him with a diamond ring and a clasp set with brilliants for his hat. There is a tradition that he was also honoured with the sword used by His Majesty on the occasion. The Rubens' coat of arms was thus further enriched by the augmentation of an angular field to the right, displaying a rampant lion, or.

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Before the master left England, in the beginning of March 1630, he paid a visit to the Dutch Ambassador Joachimi in order to discuss with him the possibility of separate terms of peace to be concluded with all the Provinces of the Netherlands. At this interview he used the expression that

Fig. 99. Portrait of the Artist by himself. (Sketch for the picture "Rubens and Helène Fourment in the Garden", in the Pinakothek at Munich). Drawing in the Albertina at Vienna.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 126.)

"Peace ought to be conferred on all the 17 Provinces, United as well as Spanish". Joachimi gave the significant answer that there was but one way to accomplish this, *i. e.* the expulsion of the Spaniards. This story is related by Carleton, who meanwhile had become Earl of Dorchester and Secretary of State, in a letter to another English Statesman; and he adds the following words: "Rubens is known among us as too honorable a

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man ever to tell an untruth." His ability as a statesman and the services he rendered in bringing about the Peace so generally desired found everywhere due recognition. When a successor had to be chosen in place of Don Coloma, Spanish ambassador to the English Court, Rubens was suggested for the appointment. The nomination however fell through, because the Spanish Grandees could not make headway against the objections of a certain Count Onate, "that a man who is to represent the King of Spain ought not to live by the work of his own hands." — Philip IV. nevertheless showed his gratitude to the master in many other ways: for example, he appointed the young Albert Rubens eventual follower of his father as Secretary to the Privy Council. In that same year, following the example of the King of England, he also conferred on Rubens the dignity of knighthood, and, according to an existing document referring to this fact, empowered him to enjoy all the prerogatives connected with this rank in every Spanish town throughout his kingdom, in the same way as if he, — the King, — had with his own hands conferred that title on him.

At the beginning of April 1630 Rubens returned to Antwerp; but only for a short time, since he was summoned to Brussels by the Archduchess. Towards the end of June, however, he was able once more to devote himself with his whole heart to his regular work. He had enough to do; for he had to commence the vast commissions received from the King of England and the Queen of France. There were besides many patrons of art all anxious to possess works by our artist's hand, and he who in his youth had so often despised the orders of men whom he thought not sufficiently versed in matters of taste, now no longer refused anyone. From the letters of his friend Balthasar Moretus we may see that in course of time he had become so shrewd a man of business, that he plainly and with much practical sense regulated the size of a painting and the number of figures according to the payment agreed on with the customer.

During his absence from home and under the ever-changing impressions made upon him by the various countries he visited; under the pressure of diplomatic duties, and among the multifarious occupations of his life at various courts, Rubens seems to have at last found that forgetfulness sought by him as the only remedy for the death of his beloved wife. When, however, he again returned to his home and studio he felt his loneliness once more, and before the end of the year he contracted a second marriage. On the 6th of December 1630 Peter Paul Rubens was married to Helena Fourment in St. James' Church at Antwerp. He was fifty-three years of age, whilst his bride, the daughter of a family of merchants and related to his first wife, was only sixteen. Her youthful charms and graceful mien are displayed to us in a magnificent portrait now in the Pinakothek at Munich by the hand of the happy bridegroom (Fig. 98). From this time it seems as if the master never wearied of painting his young wife again and again. In fact her portraits became the chief object of his art. The Munich Pinakothek also possesses a charming family group, where in the spring of 1631

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the master shows us his new conjugal happiness. We are in the garden of Rubens' house. The sun's mild beams illumine the blue sky; and lilacs and tulips are in full bloom. Rubens as usual, dressed in black in Spanish

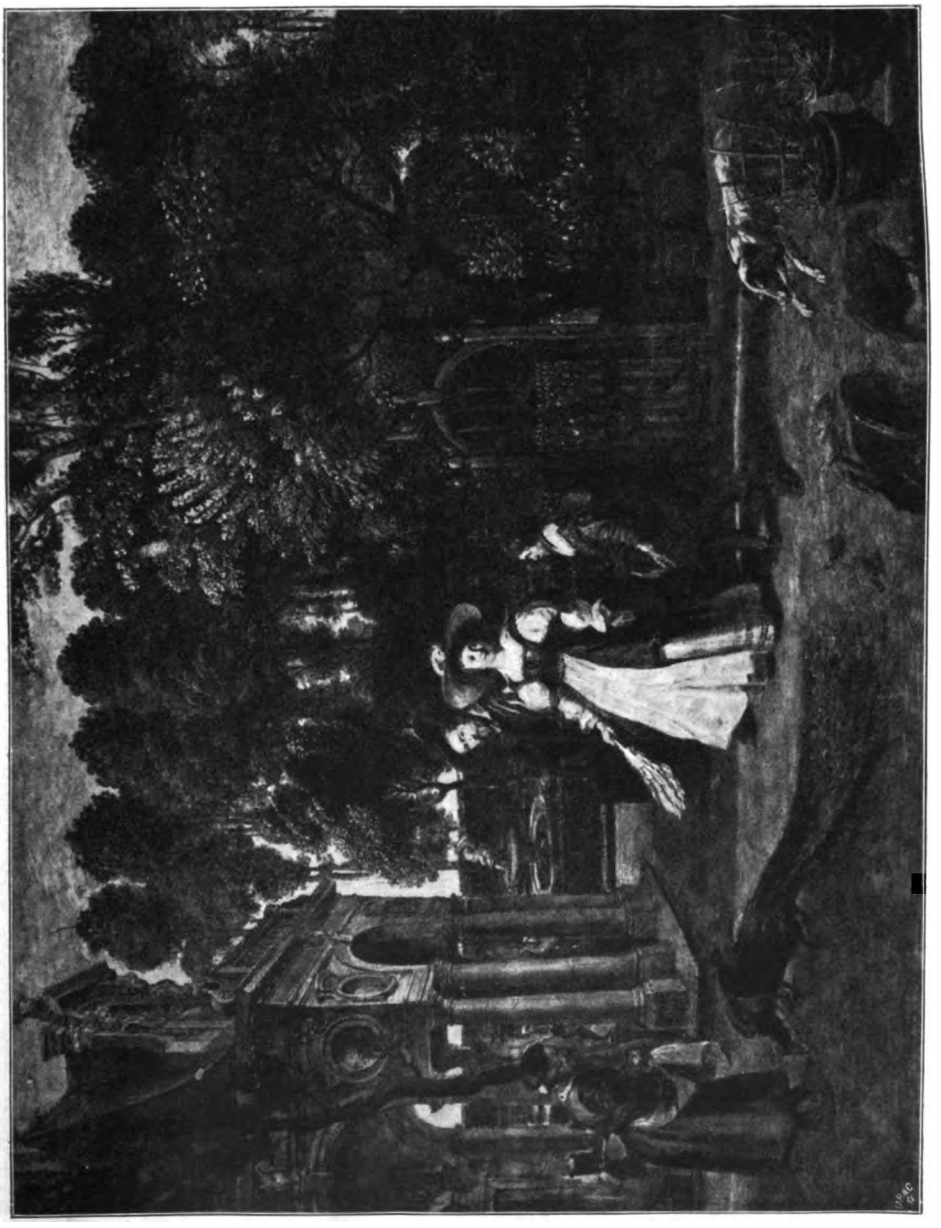

Fig. 100. Rubens with his second Wife in their Garden. In the Pinakothek at Munich. After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 126.)

fashion, leads his wife by the arm. She wears a black bodice with yellow skirt, grey petticoat and white apron, whilst a wide-brimmed straw hat protects her small and fresh-complexioned face from the sun, and she carries a fan of ostrich-feathers. Followed by the youthful Nicholas attired in red,

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the couple are strolling towards a pavilion — still existing as an example of the master's architectural tastes —, where refreshments are prepared. In the background we may observe a fountain, and in the foreground to the left an old servant is feeding peacocks. Turkeys, — cock hen and chicks — are promenading in the sun-shine, whilst a handsomely marked dog gambols around (Fig. 100). The study of his own head for this picture — painted by Rubens from a mirror, — is now preserved in the Albertina (Fig. 99).

[Fig. 101. Sketch for the picture The Garden of Love. Drawing in the Louvre at Paris.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 103.)

Immediately after his return from England the painter commenced two scenes for the Henry IV. Series. The life of that King presented more real action than was the case with the life of Maria di Medici; and the master treated the first two subjects for that series the *Battle of Ivry,* and the *Triumph of Henry IV.,* with obvious delight and with the utmost force that he was capable of. In the first, we may see the King of France on horseback towering amid the wild tumult of battle, protected by the God of War and accompanied by the Genius of Victory. In the other a solemn triumphal procession such as were held by Roman Emperors, wherein to the sound of trumpets of victory, women and children come forth with joy, to meet the King and hail him not only as victor but also as liberator. In

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Fig. 102. HELENA FOURMENT. From the van der Hoop Collection in the Museum at Amsterdam. After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 134.)

the air hover a cloud of white-robed genii extending palm-branches and wreaths of bay above the grave and noble-looking King. Both those pictures now hang in the room of the Niobids of the Uffizi Gallery at Florence. They are still unfinished having the ground colour only laid on. Indeed they can scarcely be described as pictures, but rather as colossal sketches done in the enthusiasm of first ideas: which is perhaps the reason why

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they have so great an effect on the spectator. It seems, — although it certainly was the case —, difficult to believe that the master worked upon them for only a few days. But they were fated never to be completed.

In the summer 1630 Maria di Medici arrived in the Netherlands as a fugitive. Richelieu had gained more power over her son than she possessed over him. She there met again the painter who had glorified by his pencil her earlier history, and she visited him in his studio during the autumn of 1631. But she was no longer in the position of a patroness of art, nor had she the means of paying for so great and costly a work as the Henry IV. Series would have been, had they been finally executed by the master. The poor homeless queen had not enough now for her own maintenance, and we learn that Rubens even lent her money on the security of a portion of her jewels. It is a curious coincidence that Maria di Medici, thus banished and a wanderer from place to place for eleven years, finally ended her life in the very same house at Cologne in which Rubens, who immortalized her, had passed his first childhood.

In conjunction with these two scenes from the life of Henry IV. we must mention another work, likewise unfinished, now in the Berlin Museum which represents the *Siege of Tunis by Charles V.* This also is characteristic of the master's methods of inspiring modern battle-pieces, with heroic grandeur and thus adapting them to his own particular taste and that of the time.

In 1631 Rubens was elected Master of the Guild of St. Luke at Antwerp, on which occasion he presented to that Corporation one of his early paintings, now known at the Antwerp Museum under the name of *The Madonna with the parrot.* Although an attempt at composition in the style of the great Italian masters, it is not without importance, for the lovely Infant Christ, so characteristic of the master, has peculiar charm. There is in the same Museum also another painting of the Virgin Mary which must, however have been executed about thirty years later. Originally it adorned the Carmelite Church at Antwerp. It is not a large composition, but is remarkable for its display of sentiment. The Holy Virgin, a mere child with a book in her hand, stands beside St. Anne who, seated on a stone bench, is instructing her with loving patience. Behind the bench, Joachim leaning upon a balustrade watches the group with an expression of affectionate tenderness. Charming child-angels hover amid a blue sky dotted with tiny silver clouds, and lovingly support a wreath of roses above the Virgin's head; while beside her a bower and a tall bush of roses stand in strong relief against the distant landscape.

We may also find at St. Martin's Church in the small town of Aalst (Alost) a large altarpiece of the year 1631. The plague had been ravaging in that town, and it was in commemoration of its deliverance from that dire disease that this picture was dedicated by its inhabitants to St. Roch famed as the heavenly protector against pestilence. The picture is divided into two parts; a divine one above, and an earthly one below. Above, attended by an angel, we see Christ himself, before whom the Saint kneels in deep

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devotion in an attitude of dignified humility, interceding for suffering humanity. Below we can see the terrible results of the plague: — a dead man lies on the ground, while near him another haggard victim of the same scourge, wrapt in a shroud looks the image of utter despair. We

Fig. 103. HELENA FOURMENT, SITTING IN AN ARMCHAIR UNDER A PORTICO. In the Pinakothek at Munich. After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 134.)

may also at the same time observe relief given in answer to prayer. An old man, hoary with age his arms uplifted, passionately implores the succour of Heaven: and we can even discern reviving vigour in the expression of a young woman though at the point of death. In certain groups of

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figures Hope appears to be calming the prevailing terror, thus displaying the result of the Saint's intercession. This picture, on account of its affecting sentiment, ranks among the artist's greatest master-pieces.

Whilst he here infused all the force of his genius into a religious subject, he also during the first period of his second marriage created certain compositions full of strenuous delight in life and love. Amongst these is the so-called *Garden of Love* or as it is still better designated in a contemporary engraving the Court of Venus. Rubens himself called it *Conversatie à la mode* (Figg. 104, 105). Among the various versions of this composition, which differ slightly in size and lesser details, that in the Dresden Gallery is the one best known; whilst that in the Museum at Madrid, with half-size figures, is generally considered the finest. The Dresden example is on a smaller scale, but is most carefully executed. The artist also designed this composition for reproduction as a wood-cut, which Christopher Jegher, who had already been so successful in copying from the master's sketches, executed, and which Rubens himself undertook to publish. The subject is treated with great freedom. A number of elegant cavaliers and ladies, dressed in the luxurious fashion of the period, are assembled in a garden, and seem to be full of life and spirit. It is a brilliant summer day, and the shady gloom of a grotto adorned with satyrs, *hermae,* and cascades of water tempts the heated reveller. Beside the broken rocks, is a fountain adorned with a marble statue of Venus, at whose feet most of the gay company are assembled. Upon the edge of the fountain a number of *putti* are sporting. They float in the air with brandished weapons; they hide in the rose-bushes and flutter around to assist the love-making of the various couples. Here they caress one timid maid: and there they whisper courage in the ear of another. There is throughout the whole scene the indescribeable charm of exuberant gaiety. It is easy to recognize in the centre of the composition the lovely features of Helena Fourment, radiant in youthful grace. She can also be traced as the original of a sketch, now in the Louvre, (Fig. 101), intended as a study for a lady in the *Garden of Love,* who in a reclining position is supported by a cavalier, towards whom she playfully bends her head on one side and listens with apparent pleasure.

But Rubens depicted the charms of all-powerful Love in a much more riotous and unruly manner in another picture, called the *Sacrifice to Venus,* now in the Imperial Museum at Vienna. Here we do not find as in the first composition ladies and gentlemen who in spite of the spontaneous freedom expressed in their gestures are restrained in their behaviour; but nymphs and satyrs, uncontrolled by nature, rendering homage to the Goddess of Love, around whom reels a crowd of intoxicated *putti.* But this Venus also does not limit her power to the indulgence in absolute license, for a stately female figure devoutly scatters incense upon the sacrificial flame, and two elegantly attired ladies draw near with offerings. In one of these ladies we may recognize the head of Ruben's well-known *Magdalen,* while strangely enough the features of Helena Fourment are given to one of the most wanton of the nymphs.

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Fig. 104. The Garden of Love. In the Prado at Madrid.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York. (To page 130.)

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In 1632 Rubens was once more called upon to devote part of his time to politics. In the preceding summer he had been asked by the Archduchess Isabella to exert himself again in Peace-negotiations for the Northern Provinces. We learn that in July 1631 he discussed these matters with the Marquess d'Aytona, who, as Envoy from the King of Spain, directed the foreign affairs of the Spanish Netherlands; that subsequently he had a private audience of Prince Frederic of Orange, the Dutch leader; and that in February he went once more to Holland. Disturbances also arose in Belgium, for since the death of the Archduke Albrecht all the most important posts had been given to the Spaniards, whereat the Flemish families expressed much discontent. Noblemen thus deprived of their appointments secretly communicated with the Dutch, and the Prince of Orange making an inroad into Flemish territory tried to stir up a Revolution against Spain. The United Provinces as one of their terms of Peace with the Southern Netherlands demanded that the Spanish troops should be recalled. Under these circumstances Rubens had the difficult task of arranging with the Prince of Orange, with whom he had interviews at Maastricht and Liege, the conditions of an armistice. His greatest difficulties, however, arose from his own country-men. In December 1632 the Spanish Netherlands send delegates to the Hague, but the Infanta seemed to distrust her own statesmen and therefore gave special instructions to Rubens, desiring him to meet the delegates; a commission however, which the delegates opposed. Their reasons are best told in a letter of an English Statesman, William Boswell, who describes their objections most explicitly as follows: "The delegates are ostensibly against Rubens, because he does not belong to their corporation, but it is much more probable that they are jealous because he is the special Envoy of their King and possesses much more intelligence than any of them". The Duke of Aerschot seems to have been the most violent in his opposition to this proxy for the Archduchess. Class prejudice and bitter envy made him write a letter of unpardonable insolence to the painter. Rubens resented it so much that he refused to go to the Hague, although the Infanta was most anxious to justify his commission before the delegates, by entrusting him with certain papers and desiring him to detail to them his negotiations with the Prince of Orange. On the part of his opponents the lowest means were employed to throw suspicion on the artist, although in Gerbier's words, he was "not at all a suitable object for calumny": and they even asserted that he had painted some tapestries for the Prince of Orange representing the King of Spain and his subjects in a most objectionable manner. No wonder that under such circumstances the master wearied of diplomacy, although for the sake of his Archduchess he still continued his task. In March 1633 he again negotiated with a secret envoy from the King of Denmark, who had purposely come from Holland to Antwerp at the instigation of the Infanta and the Marquess of Aytona: but before the end of the year Fate itself loosened the ties of old friendship, which had induced Rubens to continue

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so long his diplomatic career. The Archduchess Isabella died on the 1st of December 1633, and after the death of this princess, whom Rubens had served for more than a quarter of a century, he retired altogether from

Fig. 105. The Garden of Love. In the Dresden Gallery. After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 130.)

political activity. The King of England offered him a yearly allowance, if he would accept the post of British Envoy at Brussels, but he declined it, because he wished to give himself up entirely to his family and his Art.

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His great capacity for intellectual work enabled the master amid all his multifarious occupations to find time even to review literary works. An interesting letter dated August 1, 1631, has come down to us, now preserved in the British Museum in London,—written by him to Franz Junius, a native of Heidelberg, librarian of the Duke of Arundel, who had written a book "On the Art of Painting among the Ancients", which work had been forwarded to our artist for his opinion. Rubens began the letter in Flemish, but as soon as he begins to discuss the subject of the learned treatise he gives his opinion in Latin, taking up the Flemish again only towards the end, which concludes with a few friendly words. The great admiration which the painter retained for the ancient artists finds expression in words such as these: "I study them with deepest veneration and I freely confess that my endeavours to follow in their steps are greater than my powers of approaching them even in my thoughts". He also gives it as his opinion that it is very desirable that an able historian should be found for Italian Painting; "an art which appeals to us even more directly than that of the ancients, and of which we have as yet so imperfect a knowledge".

Rubens was occupied in the year 1633 in executing a number of portraits for his old friend, the publisher Balthasar Moretus. Some were of relations; others of celebrated men of past and present. Moretus' residence, now known as the Plantin-Moretus Museum at Antwerp still possesses fourteen of these portraits, painted at different periods. The artist as he had previously done also designed title-pages for his friend, continuing to do so up to the last years of his life, and paying particular attention to the engraving of these works. We learn, from a letter which he wrote in May 1655 to a French friend, Nicolas Claude Fabri de Peirese, the learned archeologist, that he even worked over the engravers' plates, whenever it seemed to him to be necessary. To Peirese, with whom he carried on a very lively correspondence, he owed the protection of the engravings made from his works in France. It is however curious to note that this privilege once brought upon the master a law-suit, set on foot by certain French engravers, who on their side alleged that the copyright prohibiting reproductions from Rubens' originals took vast sums of money out of the country, since the demand for these engravings was so great.

As we have already pointed out Rubens never weared of painting portraits of his beautiful wife, and amongst them created some of his finest master-pieces. Helena Fourment figures in nearly every Museum in Europe, and it would be difficult to give the palm to any particular one of the many representations of her. We find her in all her charming grace among the Hoop-Collection at the Amsterdam Museum (Fig. 102): and again life-size, in the same attitude and similar attire, among the numerous portraits owned by the Munich Pinakothek (Fig. 103). The collection of Baron Alphonse de Rothschild in Paris includes another celebrated painting, in which Helena Fourment appears at the porch of her house stepping

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into her carriage. In the same collection there is also a delightful family group, which must have been painted about 1632. In the month of January of that same year Madame Helena presented her husband with a daughter, who was christened Clara Joanna. When this child made her first efforts to walk with the help of a leading-string Rubens could not refrain from depicting her in all her childish helplessness. A precious sketch for this picture is now in the Louvre. In a trellised walk we see little Clara Joanna attached to her leading-string — the central figure of this family-group. She is supported by her mother, to whom she is playfully turning round, whilst her father walks beside them, watching his wife and holding the hand with which she guides the infant. This picture together with the one previously mentioned came into the possession of the town of Brussels at Rubens' death. At the commencement of the 18th century, however

Fig. 106. HELENA FOURMENT.
In the Hermitage at St. Petersburg.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York. (To page 136.)

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the Town presented both paintings to the Duke of Marlborough, Liberator of the Netherlands from the French; and the descendants of that hero preserved them among their art-treasures at Blenheim-Palace until 1885, when that Collection was dispersed. Beside these two portraits another at the Hermitage in St. Petersburg is considered one of the most exquisite likenesses of Ruben's second wife. She is there portrayed life-size, attired in a black silk-

Fig. 107. SKETCH FOR A DECORATIVE STRUCTURE, erected in the Corn-Market at Amsterdam, on the occasion of the Entry of the Cardinal Infant, Ferdinand of Austria. In the centre is represented the Cardinal Infant crowned bringing hope to the dejected Belgians. Coloured sketch in the Hermitage at St. Petersburg.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 140.)

robe; her sleeves and head dress trimmed with mauve ribbons. Violets bloom at her feet, and a cloudy sky forms the background (Fig. 106).

In the summer of 1634 Rubens completed the paintings designed to adorn the Banqueting Hall at Whitehall. Spaniards, French and people of all nationalities flocked to admire this master-piece, which however was not despatched to England for another year. Ill-natured report suggested that the King of England had no money to pay for them, and since

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Fig. 108. The Captives. Drawing in the Albertina at Vienna.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York. (To page 140.)

the pictures sustained some injury by remaining too long packed in rolls they had to be worked over again by the master before they were finally forwarded to their destination. Rubens wished very much to go over to England himself to see them finally set up in position; but gout, which now often confined him to his bed for weeks together, prevented him.

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The winter of 1634—1635 brought him a commission hardly less extensive, but intended, however, as no permanent memorial but rather to give additional splendour to one of those festivals which Antwerp better than any other town knew to arrange. The King of Spain had chosen his only brother the Infant Ferdinand, Cardinal-Archbishop of Toledo as successor to the Archduchess Infanta Isabella: and on the 17th of April 1635, amid the acclamations of the populace, the new Governor celebrated his State Entry into the proud city of Antwerp with unprecedented splendour. The cost of the display is said to have amounted to 78,000 florins which reckoned in English money would be about £5000. All the artistic elements of the first rank which this Art-City could command were employed to erect a number of temporary buildings, adorned with sculpture and painting. The entire direction of this vast enterprise was given to Rubens: and he executed numberless sketches of marvellous freshness and unabated imaginative power, although whilst composing them, he was not unfrequently bound down by gout to his chair. There were in all eleven colossal compositions, five triumphal arches, four stands, one state coach and a gallery of twelve portraits, representing the Emperors of the House of Habsburg. Some of the pictorial representations in these decorations were designed to offer special honour to the Archducal couple, Albrecht and Isabella; while others did homage to the new Governor, celebrated as the Victor of Nördlingen, a battle fought by him in company with King Ferdinand of Hungary against the Swedes. He had also inflicted heavy loss on the Dutch at Caloo, from which date they had to lament the destruction of their trade by the blockade of the Scheldt: and hopes were expressed that the new ruler would ameliorate this condition of affairs. Some of the representations were in entirely mythological form, others were allegories in which history and mythology were combined, to explain which Gevaerts composed Latin Poems. The architecture was a rich *baroque*, a style into which in the hands of Rubens that of the Italian Renaissance usually developed.

Unfortunately on account of his ailment the artist could not be present at the festivities on the day of the State Entry, but the Cardinal Infant paid him a visit the very next day to express his personal gratitude, and the admiration inspired in him by this great and most successful work. We hear further that he conversed with Rubens for some time, evidently taking great pleasure in his society.

These temporary architectural decorations remained in position but a few weeks: but the most important of the paintings were subsequently restored and presented by the Cardinal Infant as a gift from the town of Antwerp to the city of Brussels, together with the portrait-busts of the Emperors. The remainder were put up to auction, but as the first portion of them realised but a very small amount, the Municipality decided to keep the rest to serve again on future occasions. It is not known exactly what became of them, but probably the greater part were lost. One of the larger compositions, however, has been preserved, and fortunately one of which, not

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Fig. 109. PORTRAIT OF A MAN OF LETTERS. In the Pinakothek at Munich.
After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 142.)

only the design, but also the execution is due to Rubens himself. This is is now in the Dresden Gallery. It served to decorate an erection near St. George's Church: in it *Neptune the God of the Sea* is represented *calming the waves during the voyage of the Cardinal Infant.* This canvas is known under the title of Virgil's well known words *"Quos ego"*. The portraits of King Ferdinand and the Infant his namesake, now in the Royal Museum at Vienna, it seems also, adorned the same erection. They were however not painted by Rubens himself, although his masterly influence show their expressive countenances. The same statement applies to the great picture the *Meeting of the two Ferdinands before the battle of Nördlingen,* also the work of a pupil. By the master himself are the two splendidly decorative portraits of Albrecht and Isabella now in the Museum at Brussels, which were designed for a Triumphal Arch. Of the sketches there are many more still in existence, although they represent but a small part of the whole work. In the Collection at Windsor there is a sketch for the picture of the *Battle of Nördlingen,* whilst three architectural sketches are in the Museum at Antwerp and six at the Hermitage. Among the latter there is the sketch for the above mentioned *Neptune* and another

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for a painting which adorning another erection at St. John's Bridge, symbolized *the Languishing State of Trade through the Departure of Mercury;* whilst yet another designed to decorate the Old Cornmarket represents *the new Governor, attended by Victory, comforting a kneeling woman,* intended to personify the

Fig. 110. The Boar-Hunt, In the Dresden Gallery.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York. (To page 142.)

Netherlands (Fig. 107). Besides these sketches for Decorations and triumphal arches, there are in the St. Petersburg Gallery also five of the portrait busts executed in stone, whilst various remnants are dispersed in other collections. The fine drawing in the Albertina of *Chained and Conquered Warriors*, which we reproduce in Fig. 108, formed no doubt also a part of the great series of compositions created by the genius of Rubens for this Festival.

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The entire work was subsequently etched on copper by his favourite pupil, Theodor van Thulden:—a commission given to him by the town of Antwerp soon after the entry of Ferdinand, and published in 1641—42, in forty separate plates with elaborately descriptive letterpress by Gevaerts.

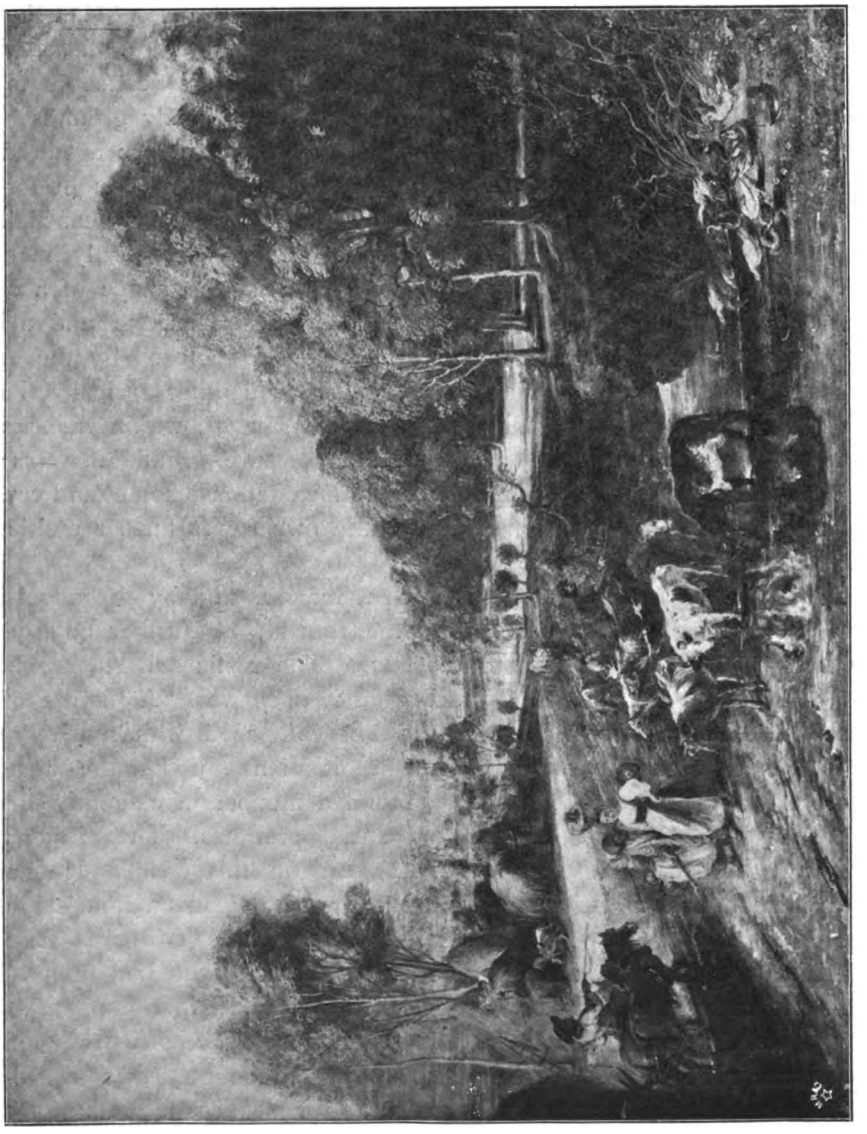

Fig. 111. Landscape with a Rainbow. In the Pinakothek at Munich. After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 144.)

One sheet, which was missing in this publication, was subsequently etched by Schelte a Bolswert.

Whilst Rubens for this work drew largely from the inexhaustible sources of his unequalled imaginative power, displaying his great talent in designing and display of gorgeous decorations, he, on the other hand, during the same period showed an ever-increasing affection for simpler compositions

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from nature. In this connection we must record in the first place, the portrait of an *Old Savant,* now in the Pinakothek at Munich, one of the best likenesses that the artist ever painted (Fig. 109), and the magnificent one of himself in the Imperial Gallery at Vienna, which probably dates from about 1635. To these may be added moreover, as belonging to the same period, a series of landscapes, realistic in conception, but somewhat sketchy in execution, though nevertheless wonderful in effect. One of these, which may reasonably be regarded as drawn from an actual scene, is in the National Gallery and represents an old castle, amid shady grounds, surrounded by a moat. It is a view of the country residence acquired by Rubens in 1635. On the 12th of May in that year, Rubens bought for the sum of about 93,000 florins the manor of Steen at Eppeghem near Malines. There was, — so the contract of purchase states, — "a lordly mansion built of stone, with other buildings: the whole in the shape of a castle with a court-yard, an orchard of fruit-trees, a drawbridge and a high mound with a tower on the top. Besides a lake enclosed by the estate there are various farmbuildings, sheds, stables and other agricultural conveniences. Four acres and 50 Ruten (275 yards) in all, within the circumference of the moat. There are moreover pleasure-grounds, walks and avenues planted with fine young oaks". It included also some land consisting of woods, meadows and fields, and the owner was further entitled to certain manorial fees and rents.

Rubens soon transformed this ancient manor, and by the acquisition of another smaller estate known as Attenvoorde, he further enlarged it into a most comfortable summer residence. The castle still stands, but it gives but an imperfect idea now of what it once was. A picture of the Castle of Steen and its surroundings, but composed with much greater freedom is now in the Imperial Museum at Vienna under the name of *the Rural Feast,* wherein, in the foreground a number of elegantly dressed ladies and gentlemen are revelling in social pastimes. The master now regularly passed the fine seasons of the year on this estate. He had as a near neighbour David Teniers the younger, who lived an hour's journey from Steen at a country-seat, called Drij Toren (three Towers). That our artist kept up friendly relations with his neighbour, who had in his early days attained fame and distinction, is shown by the fact that in 1637 Teniers married Rubens' ward, Anna, the daughter of his old friend Breughel.

It was probably his prolonged stay in the country that contributed at this time to the master's marked love for landscape painting. Out of about 50 landscapes painted by him, by far the greater number belong to this period. Each one of Rubens' landscapes is a master-piece in its own way in colouring and composition. His inventive power frequently found eloquent expression in the calm of nature, and in the landscapes of the last period of his life we may specially notice an air of peace and repose. Among the finest of them should be noted a splendid *Woodland-Scene with a Boar Hunt* in the Dresden Gallery (Fig. 110).

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A mythological Hunt, — that of Meleager, — forms the accessory feature in a splendid virgin forest scene in the Museum at Madrid. Unsurpassed as a rendering of wild unrestrained life is a painting in the Imperial Museum

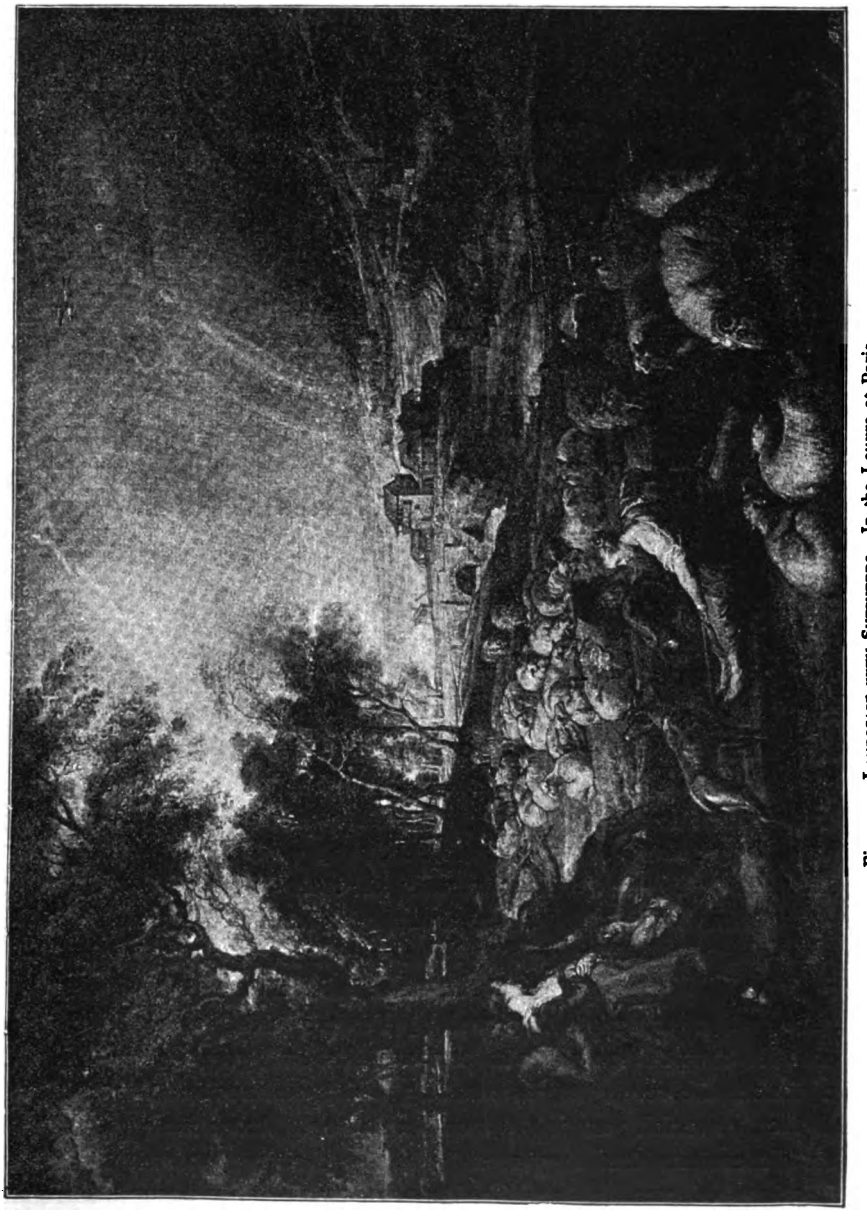

Fig. 112. Landscape with Shepherds. In the Louvre at Paris.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York. (To page 144.)

at Vienna, representing *the Approach of the Great Flood by which Zeus punished the inhospitable Earth.* A calm after a storm on a rocky sea-coast is beautifully represented in a picture at the Pitti Palace in Florence, designated as *Ulysses on the Island of Phæacia.* This latter picture how-

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ever, belongs to the master's early period: and another no less important painting in the same collection must belong to his latest years. It represents peasants returning from harvest. The tone of this picture gives an impression of a mild summer-evening, the landscape is of a genuine Dutch type and a town visible in the background is unmistakely Malines. The plain of Laeken is represented in a celebrated work now in the Collection of the King of England at Buckingham Palace. Among the varied phases displayed by nature none has been so often chosen by Rubens as when amid light breaking through stormclouds a rainbow spreads irridescent colour over the sky. Of this nature, the Munich Pinakothek possesses a splendid example. We are gazing across a wide plain whereon golden crops contrast with green meadows. At the edge of a forest over some groups of trees we can see the brilliant rays of the sun forming a strong silhouette against dark but disappearing clouds. Country folk with carts and cows enliven the road, which winds beside a river upon which ducks are disporting themselves. All nature is depicted in the full glory of summer. A fierce sun pierces the damp air and the arc of a rainbow crosses nearly the whole width of the picture (Fig. 111). Still more powerful in its effect is another rainbow landscape in the Louvre. Here the storm is approaching from a distance. Dazzling rays of sunshine are breaking through masses of cloud and scatter over a hilly country a vivid play of light and shadow. In the foreground beneath the trees, a shepherd and shepherdesses peacefully slumber apparently giving no heed to the distant storm (Fig. 112). A quieter and simpler keynote is struck in an idyllic landscape in the Munich Pinakothek: a poetically conceived piece of realism (Fig. 113), such as could only be visible to the eye of a poet.

The free life of the Flemish peasant and the merriments at those festivities which on such rare occasions interrupt their labour also attracted the master. The Imperial Museum at Vienna possesses a sketch of *Dancing Peasants,* but the chief work of this kind is the *Kermesse* in the Louvre. It is certainly surprising to see how the painter of court-life and elegant splendour, could give himself up also to the study of a lower class of society, who, inebriated and excited by beer and dancing stroll through the meadows in vulgar riot. It is a scene of rural life, though it cannot be considered as true to nature as similar scenes depicted by Teniers and Browers. Nevertheless even in this composition we can perceive Rubens' great genius. The wild frantic dance, the revelry and sensuality, which perhaps far surpass the limits of real fact, especially among a northern people, have here grown to such gigantic dimensions that they seem grand in their very coarsness (Fig. 117).

Paintings of rural life and landscapes however only occupied the artist's leisure moments; his serious work went on besides, just the same. Between the years 1634—1637 he painted for the Abbey of Afflighem a large altar-piece, the subject of which was the *Way of the Cross.* This picture, now in the Museum at Brussels, is a most curious and powerful work. The canvas is occupied by a crowd of people pressing onward in a long

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procession towards Calvary. There are many banners; horsemen brandish their weapons: everything expresses movement. But this mob of shouting, seething humanity throws into greater constrast the One Figure, which crushed to the earth under the weight of His Cross brings the procession

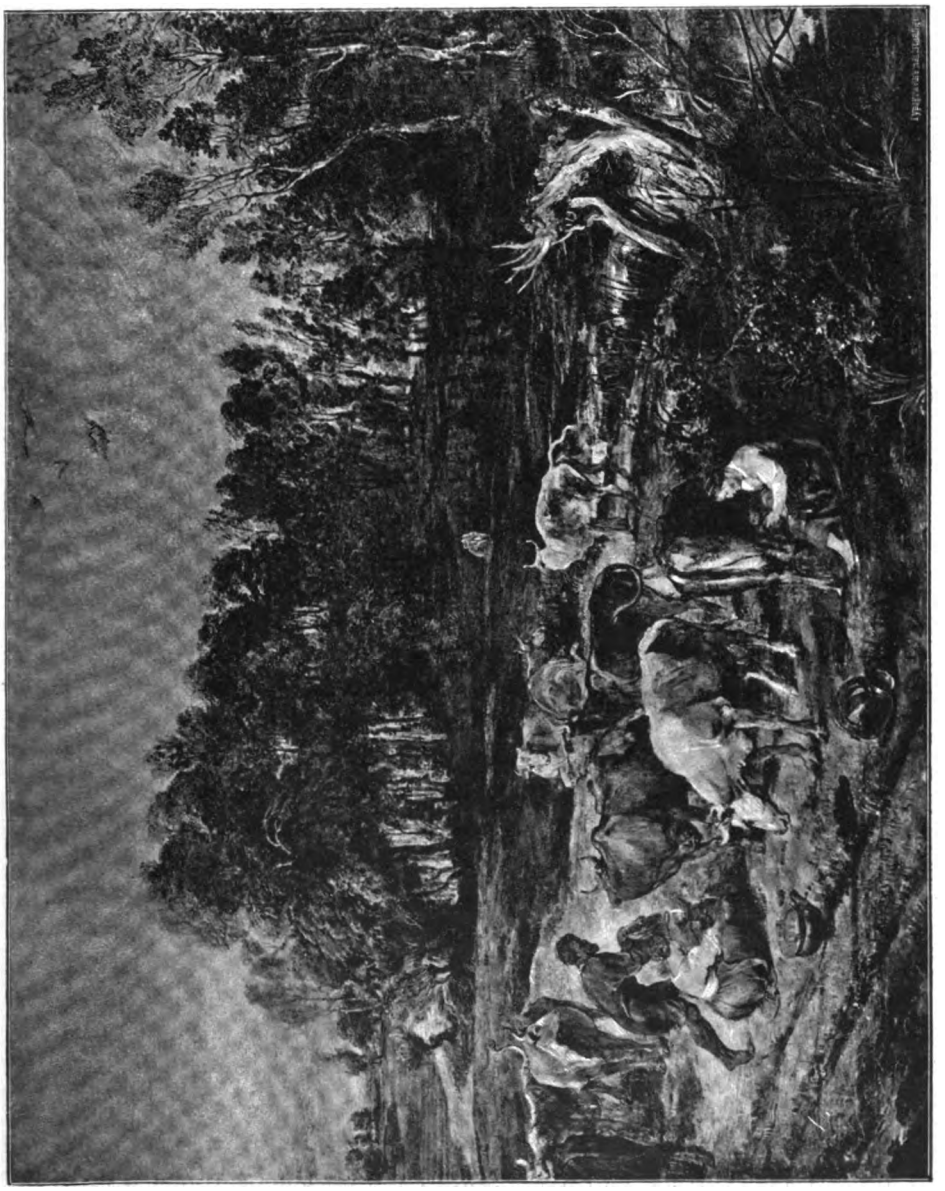

Fig. 113. Landscape with Cows. In the Pinakothek at Munich.
After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 144.)

to a stand-still. Simon of Cyrene with the assistance of a slave endeavours to raise the Cross, and Veronica at the same moment hastens to wipe the Saviour's forehead, whilst the Virgin, striving to throw herself before her son, is held back by St. John.

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An impressive picture of helplessness and passionate grief is depicted in the *Massacre of the Innocents*, at the Munich Pinakothek. From a portico, to one of the columns of which a placard is attached recording the barbarous edict of Herod, we see a crowd of warriors coming forth with cruel delight and horrible brutality to execute their inhuman orders. This terrible command strikes ruthlessly at all mothers irrespective of rank. Some of the women thus suddenly robbed of their darlings are very richly dressed, whilst others are clad in poor garments, and some even scarcely clothed at all. Their varied expressions of grief are as different as their appearence. Some throw themselves furiously on the murderers and try to tear from them their deadly weapons; others piteously plead for mercy; whilst others cast themselves weeping over the tiny corpses of their children, which they bear tenderly away, or hold up their arms in wild grief to heaven, whence angels descend with crowns of martyrdom (Fig. 114).

In 1638 Rubens painted for the high altar of the Capuchin Church at Cologne a picture representing *St. Francis receiving the Stigmata*, now in the Wallraf-Richartz Museum at Cologne (Fig. 116). He repeated here with some slight variations another altar-piece painted in 1632 for the Church of the Carmelites at Ghent, now in the Museum of that town. The subject excluded all display of colouring, but the master nevertheless succeeded in producing admirable effects of brown and grey interspersed with golden lights. The Hermitage at Petersburg possesses a very carefully executed sketch of the head of a *Franciscan Monk* looking up with devotion to St. Francis (Fig. 115).

At times it seemed that the master's greatest delight was to portray the members of his own family. In the summer of 1633 his wife had presented him with a son, who received the name of Francis. In the spring of 1635 a little daughter followed, named after both his wives Isabella Helena, and in the spring of 1637 another boy was born, to whom was given his father's name of Peter Paul. The fifth child of this marriage Constantia Albertina was born in January 1641, eight months after her father's death. When little Francis was three years old Rubens painted the charming portrait group of the mother and child, now in the Pinakothek at Munich: His wife in a plainly made dress of rich brocade, her head covered with a broad-brimmed hat is seated in a vestibule, beside a door-way thrown yet more into shadow by a curtain hanging from the columns of its projecting lintel. With both hands she supports her little son. He sits upon her lap perfectly nude, but wearing a velvet cap on his fair curls. Both turn toward the spectator with a bright expression in their eyes (Fig. 118). In the Louvre Collection there is a similar picture of *Helena Fourment with her first-born son*: whilst yet another, in the same Picture Gallery, painted about three years later, transports us to the same vestibule — probably a favourite resort of hers,— where she is also clasping both hands round a lovely little boy seated upon her knee, and

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Fig. 114. The Massacre of the Innocents. In the Pinakothek at Munich. After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl, Munich. (To page 146.)

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contemplates him with motherly pride, while with eyes full of childish mirth he gazes out of the picture. This is Peter Paul the Younger, who, though very closely resembling his elder brother, appears to be somewhat more delicate. The plump little maiden on her mother's left hand seems to be jealous of the attention paid to her little brother. This picture was left unfinished, but nevertheless captivates the spectator by that indefinite charm

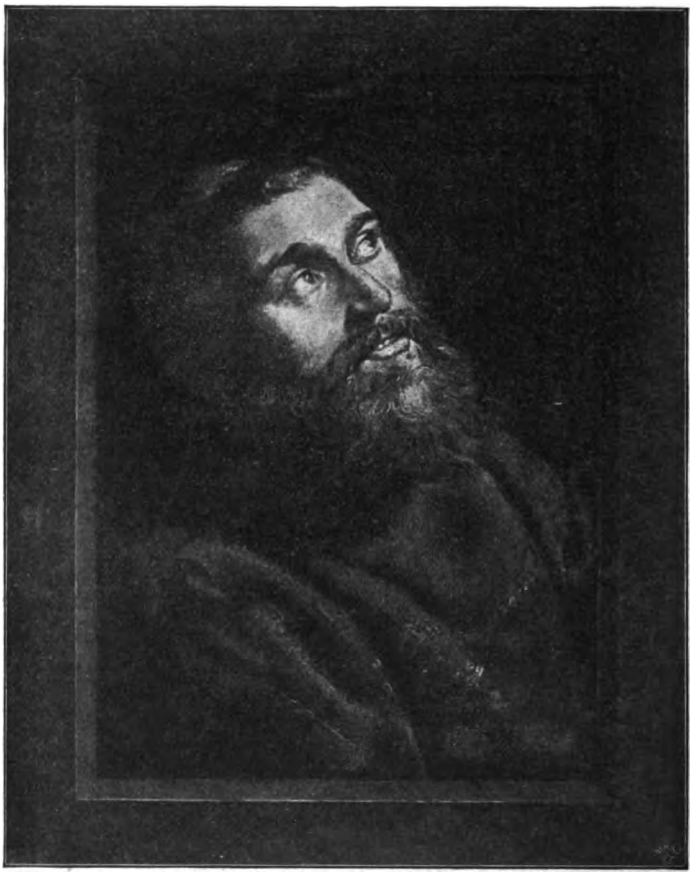

Fig. 115. A Franciscan Monk. Study. In the Hermitage at St. Petersburg.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York.
(To page 146.)

inseparable from a first happy thought, whilst its sunny tone seems to express the happiness of the mother and child here portrayed (Fig. 119).

We cannot wonder that we meet the gracious young wife so frequently. With but a slight change of feature, she appears as the *Madonna* in a picture at the Cologne Museum representing *Mary with the Infant Christ and the little St. John*, behind whom is St. Joseph. The naked Christ Child here is but a repetition of the infant Francis Rubens of the Louvre Collection (Fig. 120). Again we recognise Helena Fourment in a wonder-

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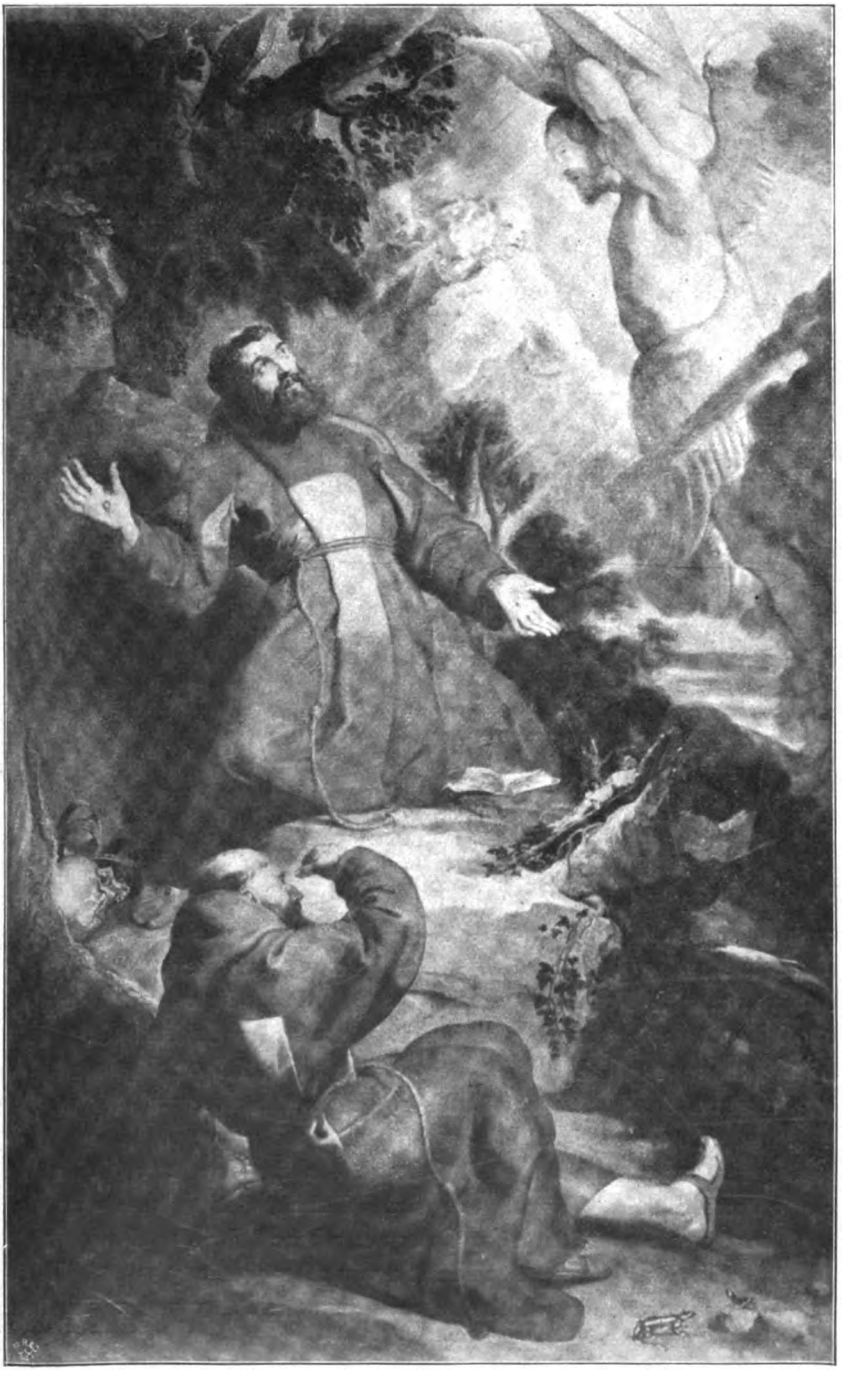

Fig. 116. St. Francis receiving the Stigmata. In the Wallraf-Richartz Museum at Cologne.
(To page 146.)

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fully expressive *St. Cecilia* at the Berlin Museum; whilst the *Andromeda* acquired by the same Gallery from the Blenheim Palace Collection, seems to have an unintentional likeness to the master's second wife.

There is another *Andromeda*, belonging to his last period, in the Museum at Madrid, in which the dark metal of the armour of Perseus loosening her chains, forms an effective contrast to the luminous flesh tints of the maiden. Among the other Mythological scenes painted during the master's last years, are *Diana at the Chase* (with animals by Snyders) in the Berlin Museum; and a small picture painted as a design for the decoration of a ceiling in the Academy of Fine Arts at Vienna, which by the figures of *Apollo* and *Diana in her Chariot* symbolizes *Day and Night,—the Rising* and *the Setting Sun.*

The last works of Rubens are mostly large altar-pieces. The Augustinian monks of Prague gave him in 1637 a commission for two pictures of colossal dimensions, intended to adorn the high altar of their Church, dedicated to St. Thomas. The subject of the principal painting was the *Martyrdom of the Apostle Thomas in the Island of Ceylon,* whilst the other represented *St. Augustine and the Boy, who strove to empty the sea.* These paintings, executed with the help of pupils, were sent to Prague in 1639, where they may still be seen in the positions for which they were designed.

Rubens however executed entirely with his own hands another altar-piece for Cologne, known to have been ordered by the rich banker and patron of art, Jabach of that city; who, nevertheless, did not negotiate for it with the master himself, but dealt with him through the medium of a painter named Geldorp, residing in London. Rubens wrote to the latter in 1637 that the picture was not, as he had supposed at first, intended for London but for Cologne:

"Sir, I have received your esteemed letter of last June, which does away with all my doubts. I could not understand for what reason an altar-piece should be wanted in London. With regard to the time, I should need about a year and a half to enable me to serve your friend comfortably and without hindrance. For some subjects are better painted on a large scale, while others come out more satisfactorily in smaller dimensions. If it were left to me to choose the episode in St. Peter's life, I should select his *Crucifixion:*—that moment when he is being nailed to the cross with his feet uppermost. It seems to me that this would give me an opportunity to create something really remarkable. But I leave the choice entirely to the giver of the commission; and until the size of the painting has been decided upon. I have a great affection for Cologne, where I lived until my 10th year, and I have often felt a desire to see it again after so many years. But I fear that the difficult times in which we are living and my work will interfere with the accomplishment of this wish and many more besides. I sincerely pray for your good-will etc"...

The subject suggested by Rubens was accepted and the master set to work on the *Crufixion of St. Peter.* On the 2nd of April he wrote to Geldorp: "I hasten to inform you that the picture has made very great

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Fig. 117. The Fair. In the Louvre. After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York. (To page 144.)

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progress and I hope that it may prove to be one of my best works. You may without hesitation inform your friend of this, but I should not like to he hurried in its completion. Nay! on the contrary, I pray that this may be left entirely to me, so that I may be able to finish it, at my own convenience. For the subject attracts me more than all the other works, although I am laden with work", — And in very truth this Cologne altar-piece did become one of the most powerful creations of the master. Though the subject may not altogether appeal to us yet we cannot refrain from feeling the deep impression created by the master in the agonizing spectacle of the Martyr, whose muscular strength offers so much resistance to the brutality of his executioners. The artistic effect of the strong light, massed on the naked breast of the Saint and shining in a more subdued tone athwart the clouds, upon which a beautiful angelic youth bearing a laurel crown and a palm descends from heaven, shows that our painter was still in possession of his full artistic powers (Fig. 121).

This painting dedicated to his Patron Saint, St. Peter, and destined for the town where he had spent his early childhood, he completed entirely with his own hands.

In the beginning of 1640 he was still full of active enterprise. The King of England wished to adorn the bedchamber of his Queen, Henrietta Maria, in Greenwich Palace. Jacob Jordæns, Rubens' gifted associate, having been suggested for the task, Gerbier, English Envoy at Brussels, received the necessary instructions to arrange the matter through the medium of the Abate della Scaglia. Gerbier however immediately wrote to England, to point out to the King, that Rubens would be the more suitable person for such a commission. Shortly after he began to negotiate with the artist on the subject, and in May 1640 Rubens made to the Abate della Scaglia the following proposition: that he would represent *the Banquet of the Gods* in the centre of the inlaid ceiling with *The Loves of Cupid and Psyche* on one side, and *Psyche receiving Immortality* on the other. It seems that Rubens did not wish to undertake more; but since the ceiling was divided into something like nine panels, he proposed that the six others should be adorned by other artists with grotesques or other decorative paintings, though certainly not figures. Thus the differences of style which would be sure to appear if similar paintings to his, were chosen, should not spoil the effect of the whole. A few weeks later Gerbier wrote to England: "Jordæns now is the finest painter in Antwerp. The one who surpassed him is dead"!

In a friendly letter which Rubens wrote in April 1640 to the sculptor Franz Dusquesnoy in Bonn, in which he thanks him for some casts, he expresses his belief that death would soon close his eyes, but he did not think that his end was so near as it proved to be. On the 27th of May he had an attack of gout aggravated by high fever, so that he expressed a wish to make his Will. The fortune which he left to his family might well be described a princely one. He had on one occasion said, not without

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Fig. 118. HELENA FOURMENT AND HER ELDEST SON. In the Pinakothek at Munich.
After a photograph from the original by Franz Hanfstängl Munich. (To page 146.)

reason, to the English alchemist Brendel, who proposed to teach him the art of making gold, that he had learned this art with his brush long before. His eldest son Albrecht received, as a special legacy, his books, whilst to his son Nicholas he left his collection of intaglios, gems and coins. To his

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wife he bequeathed one half-share of his Steen Estate and the other half of which he left to her children. With reference to his artistic property he desired that the whole of it should be sold, with the exception of his drawings, and a picture called *Pelzchen* ("the little fur"), which last was left as a personal gift to his wife. It is a life-size portrait of her at the age of eighteen, her figure wrapped only in a short mantle of black fur, loosely gathered round her shoulders and hips. This wonderfully executed picture,—never however intended for exhibition,—is now in the Imperial Museum at Vienna. The drawings were to be given to that one of his sons, who would devote himself to painting, or to that daughter, who might perhaps marry a famous artist.

With regard to his interment, he requested that a mortuary chapel should be erected, adorned with an altar-piece painted by himself, representing the *Virgin with the Infant Christ and various Saints:* and with a marble figure of the *Madonna,* modelled by his pupil Lucas Fayd'herbe. According to the custom of the country a grand mourning banquet was to be given on the day of the funeral, at which were to assemble all his relations. A second feast was to be prepared at the Guildhall; a third for the Society of the "Romanists",—a club of artists and savants who had resided in Rome, of which club Rubens had been a member since 1609; and a fourth for the Guild of St. Luke.

The great master died of heart-failure about noon on the 30th of May 1640. The entire city of Antwerp mourned his death. Characteristic utterances on the part of contemporaries have come down to us in the shape of letters of condolence, written to his old friend Balthasar Moretus, and still preserved in the Plantin-Moretus Museum. "He was the most learned painter of the world" wrote the Abbé Philip Chifflet. The best panegyric, however, pronounced on the death of this great painter, whose greatest achievements in life after all had been in the realm of Sacred Art, was spoken by the Abbé of St. Germain: "He has gone" said he "to behold in heaven the living originals of his paintings".

The funeral took place with great pomp on the 2nd of June. The whole of the clergy attached to St. James' Church, together with the Carmelite Friars, accompanied the funeral procession. Sixty orphans with lighted torches walked on either side of the bier; whilst all the higher officials of the Antwerp Municipality, the members of the Guild of St. Luke and hosts of friends and admirers of the deceased from all ranks followed the coffin. The church was draped with black and in various places the Rubens coat of arms was displayed. His corpse was at first deposited in the family vault of the Fourments, but later on was removed to the tomb which the widow built in the choir of St. James', Antwerp. According to the wish of the deceased the marble statue of the *Madonna* which Fayd'herbe had modelled was set up above the altar. The whole of the upper portion of this altar, together with the two figures of angels which adorn it, were probably also executed by the same hand. Over it is the

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Fig. 119. HELENA FOURMENT WITH TWO CHILDREN. In the Louvre.
After a photograph from the original by Braun, Clément & Co., Dornach, Paris and New-York. (To page 148.)

picture which Rubens himself designed for the purpose. Beneath an arbour the Virgin sufforts the Infant Christ who is seated in her lap. In the foreground St. Bonaventura kneels in adoration, behind her is seen St. Jerome with an open Bible. On the other side St. George and three Holy Women are

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Fig. 120. The Holy Family. In the Wallraf-Richartz Museum at Cologne. Engraving by Schelte a Bolswert. (To page 148.)

approaching, whilst four angels hover in the air with crowns and palms. The whole is a work, which for the special charm of its colouring may be ranked among the finest of the master's productions. Tradition tells us that Rubens here portrayed his own family:—his father as St. Jerome, himself as St. George and his two wives and the Fräulein Lunden as the three Holy Women. It is not impossible that there may be a certain resemblance to these individuals which however may also be detected again and again in many other pictures of the master. But tradition is certainly wrong in asserting that in this picture—the date of which cannot definitely be ascertained,—Rubens intended to especially portray himself and his family. The epitaph written by his friend Geværts was only engraved on a tablet over the tomb during the last century. Among Rubens' wonderful talents he praises specially his knowledge of Ancient History and his excellence in all the Fine Arts. He is described as the Apelles, not only of his own century, but of all time. The epitaph further points out that he enjoyed the friendship of Kings and Princes, and records the honours and distinctions conferred on him by Philip IV. It also comments on his merits as an Ambassador in procuring the conclusion of Peace.

The most valuable portion of Rubens' estate was his collection of art-treasures forming an entire Museum, of which a Descriptive Catalogue of the various objects was printed both in English and French. Among other objects of art it contained 319 paintings. Of these 9 were by Titian, 5 by Paul Veronese, 6 by Tintoretto and several by Pietro Perugino. Besides these, there were 43 copies of works by Titian and other Masters, painted by himself when in Italy and Spain. In addition there were also some 50 pictures by Early Masters, among which were, one by Durer and several by Jan van Eyck, Lucas van Leyden and Holbein. And lastly a number of

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Fig. 122. The Crucifixion of St. Peter. In St. Peter's Church at Cologne. (To page 152.)

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more modern works; 8 of which were by Van Dyck, 17 by Adrian Brouwer, several more, upon which Breughel and Saftleben had worked with Rubens himself, and some sketches from the master's own hand. The sale of this collection realized about 280,000 florins equal to about £ 50,000 of English money. The King of Spain was the principal purchaser and acquired no less than 32 pictures, amongst which were 10 by Rubens himself. These now rank among the greatest of the Art-treasures in the Madrid Museum. The Emperor of Germany, the King of Poland, the Elector Palatine and Cardinal Richelieu were likewise among the buyers.

The drawings of the master were sold subsequently when the youngest of his sons attained his 18th year; since, strange to say, none of them showed any inclination towards painting, nor did any of his daughters marry a painter. Rubens' eldest son Albert, who succeeded his father as Secretary of the Privy-Council, was a distinguished archeologist. Of Nicholas we can only learn that he died at the age of 37. Francis was elected Councillor at the Court of Brabant, and Peter Paul became a priest. Of the daughters, the eldest Clara Joanna married Philip von Parys and it is among her descendants that the line of Rubens can still be traced. Isabella Helena died at the age of 17, and the youngest Constantia Albertina, born after her father's death, took the veil.

Helena Fourment, the young widow, married again in 1645 an Assessor of Antwerp, Johann Baptist van Broeckhoven, who was subsequently created Count of Bergeyk. She lived until 1673.

The house, which Rubens had built with so much artistic taste and in which he had displayed so much splendour, was sold in 1669 by his grandson Philip. But its architectural appearence remained unchanged until 1763, when it was rebuilt according to the style of that period. The greater number of the sculptures by Fayd'herbe, with which the garden was adorned, were also removed at that date. Later on in our own time, the building was still further altered. Not only were two houses contrived out of the original one, but its finest portion, the vaulted dome under which the master's Collections had been housed, was entirely demolished.

Rubens' influence on Flemish art was for centuries a most powerful one. We may even assert with good reason, that never before had a single artist left so powerful and lasting an effect on the Art of his own country as was the case with this great artist. We have seen that the example of other great masters were fatal to their younger contemporaries, because they inspired imitation, and imitation gives the death-blow to true Art. But Rubens was not imitated, since in his case imitation was impossible. It was rather his spirit which acted with such life-giving effect on the artists around him: and he was not only the most prolific of artists,— for he painted at least 1300 pictures, of which two-thirds were executed almost entirely by his own hand — but also the most many-sided. For this reason he influenced his followers without, at the same time destroying their individuality. We may see his impulse alike in Van Dyck's portraits, and in

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Teniers' subjects:—alike in the landscapes as well as the "studies in still-life" of the Belgian school. All bear his mark, even the historical compositions executed at that period. Sculptors and architects also learned from him; whilst, as we have seen, the reproduction of his designs perfected the Art of wood-carving in Belgium at a time when no artistic wood-cuts existed anywhere else. The broad lines, which give so picturesque an effect to the Flemish etchings of the 17th century, are principally due to the Art of Rubens, assiduously studied and reproduced by the engravers, since the entire fabric of *baroque* art in Belgium centred solely in the person of this, its great founder.

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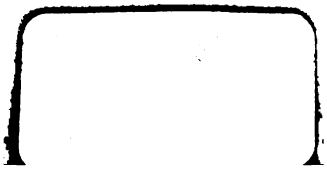

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